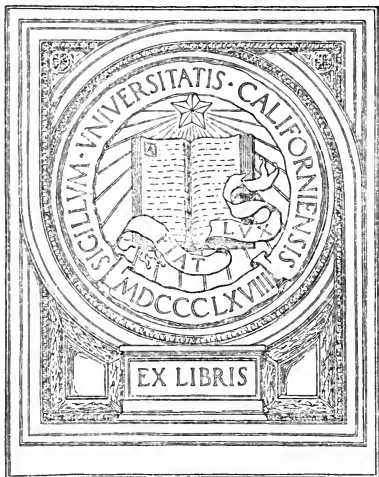
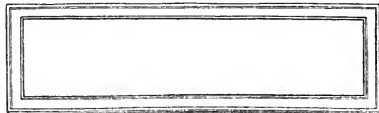


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ECHOES OF GREEK IDYLS

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AN ODE ON MEMORIAL DAY

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COLLECTED SONNETS

Being a selection of 350 of the Author's Sonnets

Published, 1905

MY LADY OF DREAM

In Preparation





COLLECTED SONNETS

OF

LLOYD MIFFLIN

REVISED BY THE AUTHOR

. Gone far astray
Into the labyrinth of sweet utterance

—Keats



HENRY FROWDE

London

1905

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ABOVE THE ABYSS	325
ACROSS THE YEARS	73
AFRICA	186
AFTER DAYS, IN	191
AFTER SEVERANCE	93
AH, TELL ME NOT	117
ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON	303
ANNUNCIATION, THE	17
ANTONY IN EGYPT	78
ANTONY TO CLEOPATRA	314
ARRIVAL OF THE "WELCOME"	183
AT THE POINT OF DEATH	323
AWAITING SUMMONS	58
BARD, THE	187
BATTLE FIELD, THE	75
BEAST, THE	293
BELLONA	55
BELoved DALES	331
BENEFACtor, THE	79
BEREFT	26
BLACK PORTALS, THE	45
BLIGHTED	28
BLUFFS, ON THE	44
BOOTH AS HAMLET, EDWIN	160
BOUQUET, THE	338
BUILDER, THE	351
BUILD THOU THY TEMPLES	155
BURKE	156

	PAGE
CARYATIDES OF THE RUINED FANE, THE	68
CASTLE, MY	267
CATARACT, THE	32
CATTLE PICTURE BY CUYP, A	364
CLOSE OF DAY, THE	116
COLOR PINK, THE	176
CONOWINGO WATERS, BY	180
CONQUEST	340
CORNWALL BEACH, ON THE	21
COUNTRY BURIAL, THE	49
 DAWN IN ARQUA	 I
DAWN OF SCIENCE, THE	354
DAYBREAK, THE	321
DEAR ARE THESE FIELDS	297
DECEMBER	347
DELAY, O LIGHT	350
DELPHIS REMEMBERS SIMETHA	298
DISILLUSIONED	324
DOORS, THE	27
DREAMERS, THE	41
DREARY DAY, THE	60
DUSK, THE	283
DYING DAY, THE	290
 EAST RAIN ON CYPRUS, AN	 43
ELEGY, AN	91
EMPTY HOUSE, THE	61
END OF ALL, THE	38
END OF EREBUS, THE	113
EROS	182
ESTRANGED	184
EVENING	65
EVENING BREEZE, THE	352
EVENING COMES, THE	105
EVENING HOSTS, THE	287

TABLE OF CONTENTS

v

	PAGE
EVENING HOUR, THE	326
EVENTIDE, AT	341
EVENING VOICE, THE	385
EURYDICE	120

ECHOES OF GREEK IDYLS

BION

IDYL—THE LAMENT FOR ADONIS. A SEQUENCE	199-208
IDYL—THE HUSBANDMAN, THE FOWLER, AND LOVE	209
IDYL—THE TUTOR OF LOVE	210
IDYL—LOVE AND THE MUSES	211
FRAGMENTS :	
VANITY OF VANITIES	212
TO THE EVENING STAR	213
TO CYPRIIS	214

MOSCHUS

IDYL—LOVE, THE ABSCONDER	217
IDYL—EUROPA AND THE BULL. A SEQUENCE	218-232
IDYL—THE LAMENT FOR BION. A SEQUENCE	233-244
IDYL—MEGARA'S LAMENT	245
IDYL—BY THE GRAY SEA	246
IDYL—THE POWER OF LOVE	247

BACCHYLIDES

FROM ODE ON VICTORY OF HIERO :

HIERO'S HORSE RACE	251
THE EAGLE	252
PHERENICUS—A HIPPOPÆAN	253

FROM ODE ON THESEUS :

SONG FOR TWO VOICES. A SEQUENCE	254-257
---	---------

FROM ODE ON VICTORY AT NEMEA :

THE DISCUS THROWER	258
------------------------------	-----

FROM FRAGMENT OF ODE ON THE TROJAN WAR :

BEFORE THE BATTLE	259
THE CONFLICT	260

FROM ODE ON HIERO'S CHARIOT VICTORY :

IN PRAISE OF VIRTUE	261
-------------------------------	-----

	PAGE
BACCHYLIDES—CONTINUED	
FROM FRAGMENT OF ODE ANTENORIDÆ:	
MENELAUS TO THE TROJANS	262
FRAGMENT:	
PEACE	263
 FADING LIGHT, THE	 59
FADING SHIP, THE	194
FAME	295
FAN, THE	54
FAR FROM THE CROWD	319
FEEDING THE PIGEONS	64
FIAT LUX	81
FIDELIA	163
FIELDS OF QUIET, THE	97
FIRST AWAKENING, THE	313
FIRST HOAR-FROST, THE	115
FLIGHT, THE	5
FROM THE ACRO-CORINTHUS	16
FROM THE BATTLEMENTS	15
FROM THE FOOT OF OLYMPUS	102
FROM THE PEAK	171
FROM THE PROMONTORY	343
FRONTIER, THE	19
 FIELDS OF DAWN, THE	
AFLOAT AT SUNSET	136
"ALONG THE REEDY SHORE"	135
APRIL FROM THE LAWN	132
AUGUST SHOWER, THE	143
BY VINE-CLAD EAVES	134
FEATHERED CHOIR, THE	131
FOOTFALLS OF THE RAIN	139
FOREST PATH, THE	129
FROM THE SHADOWY PORCH	138

TABLE OF CONTENTS

vii

	PAGE
FIELDS OF DAWN, THE—CONTINUED	
GRATEFUL SHADE, IN	142
GRASSES SERE, IN	150
HAZY WOODLANDS	148
LEGEND OF INDIAN SUMMER	149
NOVEMBER GRAY	151
RELUCTANT SPRING	130
RIVER HEADLAND, ON THE	137
SCARLET VINES, THE	147
SEPTEMBER DAYS	146
"SILENT THE HERON STOOD"	145
SULTRY AUGUST	144
SUMMER MOON, THE	140
SUMMER SOUNDS	141
SUNSET FROM THE SUMMIT	133
WILD NORTH BLOWS, THE	152
WINTER STORM, THE	153
GIFT, THE	117
GLOAMING, THE	337
GOLDEN DAYS I	8
GOLDEN DAYS II	9
GRASSHOPPER TO AURORA, THE	318
"HARVEST WAITS, THE"	332
HE BUILDS THE CITY OF ENOCH	316
HEIGHTS, THE	294
HELPERS, THE	305
HE MADE THE NIGHT	355
HE MADE THE STARS ALSO	311
HIDDEN WOUNDS	289
HOMeward BOUND	100
IDYL, AN	348
IF THOU WOULDST COME	124

	PAGE
INADEQUACY	12
IN BONDAGE	87
IN MEMORIAM	356
ISOLATION	77
" I STAND UPON THE BASTIONS "	310
INSUFFICIENCY	50
INVITATION, AN	159
INVOCATION I	362
INVOCATION II	363
IN TWILIGHT REEDS	312
JOURNEY, THE	119
LADRO	192
LA PRIMAVERA	90
LANDSCAPE BY REMBRANDT, A	72
LAST SONG OF ORPHEUS, THE	122
LEAF-DRIFTED AISLES, IN	57
LETHE	320
LIKE BELLS UNTOLLED	268
LILY OF DAWN III	111
LONGFELLOW	33
LOOKING AT THE WEST	24
LOST ISLES	25
LURID CASTLE, THE	300
MADONNA, THE	168
MARGIN OF SWATARA I	109
MARPESSA TO APOLLO	189
METROPOLIS, IN THE	329
MICHAEL ANGELO AT FORTY-SEVEN	275
MIDNIGHT BY THE CATARACT	291
MILTON	70
MONARCH, THE	46
MORS VICTRIX	353
NICARAGUA	82
NIGHTFALL ON THE DESERT	11

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ix

	PAGE
NILUS	181
"NOONTIDE GONE, THE"	360
NOVEMBER	18
"NOW LIKE A RED LEAF"	99
NYMPH, THE	23
OCEAN ISLE, THE	317
OCTOBER DAYS	84
ONSET, THE	7
ON A PAINTING	281
ON PRESENTING A SONNET	279
ON THE AVON AT STRATFORD	167
ON THE UPLAND	276
OPENING OF THE URNS	85
PALE RIDER, THE	179
PASSING OF THE QUEEN, THE	62
PASSING SHIP, A	322
PICTURE OF MY MOTHER, A	52
POET, THE	342
POLYPHEMUS TO ULYSSES	37
PROCESSION, THE	365
PRODIGALS	71
PROMETHEUS CHAINED	4
PSALM, THE	304
PSAPHO	178
PUPIL OF PHILETAS, THE	361
QUEEN OF THE TIDES, THE	106
QUESTION, THE	327
READING FROM MILTON	39
RELENT, O ATROPOS	358
RELUCTANT SPRING	130
REST AT NOON, THE	344
REVERBERATE TONES	161
RIVER AT SUNSET, BY THE	271

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
SAMSON	175
SANCTUARY	339
"SCORN FOR MYSELF I FEEL"	3
SEA, THE	34
SEA-GULL, THE	272
SEASONS, THE	14
SERVANT UNABLE TO READ, A	86
SESOSTRIS	13
SHAKESPEARE	366
SHIP, THE	89
SICILIAN IDYLS	288
SILENCE AFTER ORPHEUS' DEATH, THE	121
SILENT GUEST, THE	22
SINGER, THE	349
SOME PEAK OF HIGH ACHIEVE	296
SONNET, THE	56
SONNETS' MUSIC, THE	164
SPECTRE, THE	69
SPIRIT, THE	92
SPIRIT OF POESY, THE	96
SOVEREIGNS, THE	30
SOCRATES' DEATH	170
STILL THOU THE TEMPEST	302
ST. PAUL'S SHIPWRECK	309
STORM-CLOUDS, THE	83
STORMY PETREL, THE	173
STORM-SWEPT	292
SUBMISSION	280
SUNRISE ON THE MARSH	51
SUNSET IN HELLAS	333
TEMPLE OF APOLLO, THE	359
"THERE WAS A TIME"	286
"THESE THINGS I SAW"	188
THESEUS AND ARIADNE	123
THRESHING FLOOR, THE	80

TABLE OF CONTENTS

xi

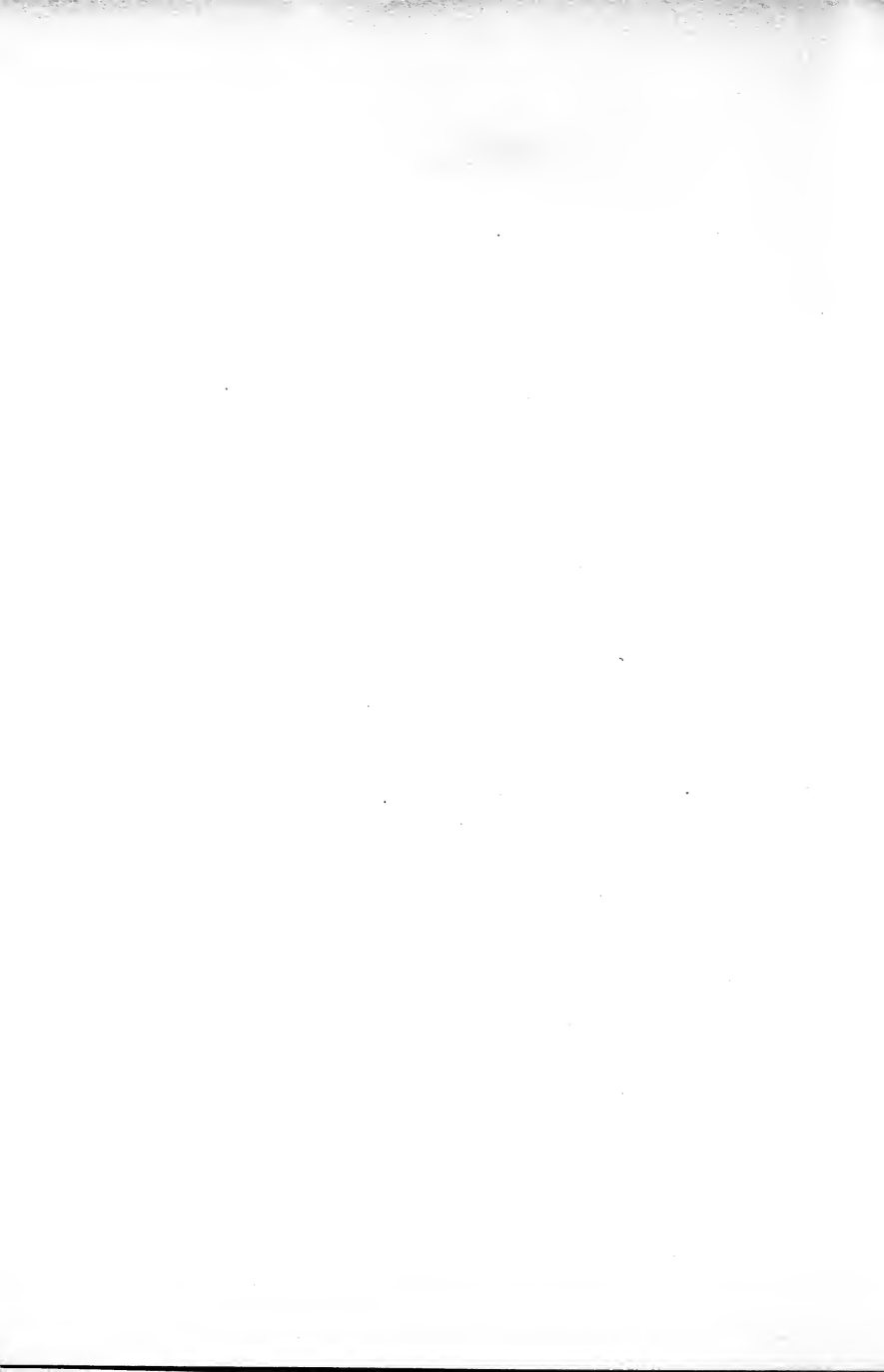
	PAGE
"THESE WASTE THE SPIRIT"	112
THEY COME AT EVENING	172
THOUGH MAY HAS COME	101
THRENE, A	185
THRONE OF DEATH, THE	42
THRUSH, THE	158
THORNY PATH BELOVED, THE	345
TITHONUS TO AURORA	269
TRANSMUTATION	98
TRAVELERS, THE	66
TRIO, THE	29
TUSCAN LACRYMATORY, A	278
TUSCAN PASTORAL, A	94
TWILIGHT FROM THE LAWN	35
TWILIGHT HEADLANDS, ON THE	31
TO AN AGÉD POET	6
TO A GENERAL OF THE REVOLUTION	166
TO A MAPLE SEED	2
TO A NATURE STUDENT	284
TO AN OLD ANCHOR	10
TO AN OLD ANCHOR ON THE COAST	315
TO AN OLD LABORER	107
TO AN OLD VENETIAN PAINTING	47
TO A YOUNG MAID	114
TO BRIZO	346
TO BYRON	118
TO RICHARD HENRY STODDARD	74
TO THE MILKWEED	125
TO THE NEW CENTURY	63
TO THE POPPY	328
ULTIMATE DAY, THE	165
UNAVAILING GRIEF	277
UNSOLACED	336
UPON THE HEARTH	104
UP WITH THE DRAWBRIDGE	157

	PAGE
VALLEY OF DREAMS, IN THE	174
VENETIAN WINEGLASS, AN OLD	334
VICTIM, THE	190
VICTOR, THE	53
VINEYARD OF ASTI, IN A	299
VISION, THE	335
VOICE FROM THE BORDER-LAND, A	282
VOICELESS, THE	330
VOYAGERS	274
VOYAGERS, THE	67
WATTEAU BEAUTY, A	36
WEDDING MORN, THE	48
WILL THESE FADE TOO?	308
WIND-GOD, THE	193
WIND ON THE HILLS	20
WINGS OF THE MORNING II	110
WINTER WOODS	40
WITH A GREEK HERDSMAN	301
WITH FOLDED WINGS	357
WITHIN THE GATES	273
WITHDRAW, O WORLD	307
YOUNG EMBALMER, THE	108
YOUTH IN LONDON	162
"YOUTH ON THE PROW"	169





IN MEMORY OF
MY FATHER
WHO THROUGHOUT A LONG LIFE
WAS AN ARDENT DEVOTEE
OF POETRY



PREFACE

THE present volume contains certain sonnets written within the last year, heretofore unpublished, together with a selection of others from the Author's several books; namely: At the Gates of Song; The Slopes of Helicon; Echoes of Greek Idyls; The Fields of Dawn; Castalian Days, and The Fleeing Nymph. A few sonnets have been added from an unpublished sequence.

Though all of the poems have been revised by the Author, he is conscious of many shortcomings which he has been unable to remedy; emendations, however, have been made, where it was possible, in the hope of rendering the sonnets less unworthy of that indulgence with which many of them have been received, both in America and in Great Britain.

Norwood, March 4th, 1905

L. M.

*Gladly would I have waited till my task
Had reached its close; but life is insecure,
And hope full oft fallacious as a dream:
Therefore, for what is here produced, I ask
Thy favor; trusting that thou wilt not deem
The offering, though imperfect, premature.*

—WORDSWORTH.

COLLECTED SONNETS

*SCORN not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned
Mindless of its just honours; with this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camdens soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow; a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet, whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!*

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

DAWN IN ARQUÀ

INSCRIBED TO THE MEMORY OF PETRARCA

Obiit July 18, 1374

SICK of mere Fame, and of Rome's Laureate leaf
His Latin Epic brought him, up he went
To steep Arqueto, where he found content
Among the Euganean Hills—alas, too brief!
His was an irremediable grief:
That heart so loved, that head so opulent
Of gold, were long since dust. . . . Silent he bent
Above those Sonnets in that *Golden Sheaf*.
Far into midnight, lone he sat, and read
The *Rime* once again—oh, bitterest tears
By age, for love all unrequited, shed!—
Then in that volume slowly sank his head;
Thus, in the mountain cottage, bowed with years,
At early morn they found him, cold and dead.

TO A MAPLE SEED

TO E. H. M.

ART thou some wingèd Sprite, that fluttering round,
Exhausted on the grass at length doth lie?
Or wayward Fay? Ah, weakling! by and by,
Thou wilt become a giant, strong and sound,
When, like Antæus, thou dost touch the ground.
O happy Seed! it is not thine to die;
Thy wings bestow thy immortality,
And thou canst bridge the deep and dark profound.
I hear the ecstatic song the wild bird flings
In future summers from thy leafy head!
What hopes! what fears! what tender-spoken things—
What burning words of love will there be said!
What sobs—what tears! what passionate whisperings
Under thy boughs, when I, alas! am dead.

“SCORN FOR MYSELF I FEEL”

WHENE’ER I think what some rare souls have done,
Who drank the dregs of dire adversity;
Who, on the Ixion wheel of penury,
Sang while they starved, as starry Chatterton;
Those that a glorious martyrdom have won,
Dying in dungeons, chanting liberty:
Scorn for myself I feel, who, being free,
Held but my “farthing candle to the sun.”
With organ-pealings deep and reaching far,
Like Bards long dead I should have spoken loud;
They, from the top of their Olympian cloud,
Flung jeweled harmonies oracular,
That on the forehead of the centuries proud
Live on forever—deathless as a star!

PROMETHEUS CHAINED

AH no!—not tears held back, nor wail, nor shriek,
Tempestuous anger, nor delirious groan;
Nor longings, unimagined and unknown;
Nor the red javelin of the vulture's beak,—
Not these shall make the indomitable meek!
I stand against the gods for man alone.
This bed of anguish shall become a throne;
These chains, O Jove! shall consecrate this peak.
Nay, shouldst thou slide the multitudinous sands
Of Libya through an hour-glass in thy hands
To time the future of my doom forlorn,
Yield would I not! Thy tortures have I borne,
Thy vulture, thunder, lightning, and commands,
Yet thee I still defy—defy and scorn!

THE FLIGHT

UPON a cloud among the stars we stood:

The angel raised his hand, and looked, and said,

"Which world of all yon starry myriad

Shall we make wing to?" The still solitude

Became a harp whereon his voice and mood

Made spherul music round his haloed head.

I spake—for then I had not long been dead—

"Let me look round upon the vasts, and brood

A moment on these orbs ere I decide. . . .

What is yon lower star that beauteous shines,

And with soft splendor now incarnadines

Our wings?—*There* would I go, and there abide."

Then he, as one who some child's thought divines:

"That is the world where yesternight you died."

TO AN AGÈD POET

WHAT if the boat be drifting down the stream,
And oars, well-worn, hang idly by the side?
Must man forever pull against the tide
Nor bask a little in the sunset beam?

O Worker in the glorious realm of Dream,
Rest thou awhile, and let the River guide;
Far—far beyond thee, as the waters glide,
Behold the Beauteous City, golden, gleam!

Vex not thy soul, nor fear the coming night;
When evening goes, shall burst the morning light
O'er all the ocean of eternity:

Be sure, O Friend, there is a destiny
That holds the rudder, and that steers aright,—
Then let the current sweep us to the sea!

THE ONSET

TO E. R. T.

At the dread waving of Apollyon's rod,
Astride their frenzied chargers snorting flame,
On sulphurous clouds the wingèd Legions came,
With hate enpanoplied, and vengeance shod.
Up from the Nadir, myriads of them trod
The shining steeps to Heaven with wild acclaim;
Furious they rushed, vindictive,—and their aim,
To storm the inviolable gates of God!
As swarms of sea-birds, by the sunset dazed,
Blot out the sky near Kolanara's coast,
So, countless, flew they where the splendor flared;
While eager on the peaks, with wings upraised—
Dark 'gainst the fulgence of the surging host—
The Heralds, from their lifted trumpets, blared!

GOLDEN DAYS

I

Who 's this a-coming through the mellow haze
Nude as young Bacchus, russet-skinned, embrowned;
His head with clustered grapes and grape-leaves bound
And trailing vines of scarlet all ablaze?
From golden wigwams of the Indian maize
He husks the red-grained ears; o'er stubbled ground
Bowls, in his mirth, the yellow melons round;
Dozes anear the cider-press for days,
Sipping the oozèd juice of pomace lees;
And leaning on the cope of orchard walls,
Watches the golden apple till it falls;
Searches the velvet burr 'neath chestnut-trees,
And brings the partridge to him by his calls,—
Who 's he that so delights in things like these? . . .

GOLDEN DAYS

II

Who 's he that so delights in such soft ease?

Who, dreamless, lolls throughout the dreamy days?

Who spreads the dim and amethystine haze

In all the dells, and for the full-fed bees

Bursts the late pear, and makes its mell increase?

Who marks the glint of wings in woodland ways—

The gold of flickers, and the blue of jays?

Who wafts the thistle-down to far-off seas,

And spins the spider threads across the fields

Of evening, golden in the setting sun?

Who, plucking clusters that the ripe vine yields,

Stains his lips purple? . . . Ah! there is but one—

Autumn, that drowsy Faun, who glides away

Down through the fading woods—and all is gray!

TO AN OLD ANCHOR LYING FAR INLAND
AT MATAMORAS

PERCHANCE some Spanish galleon, after gold,
Dragged thy rude bulk along the coral reef;
Perhaps some blustering, buccaneering thief,
His mutinous crew held down within the hold,
Dropped thee in cypress inlets, while he rolled
His booty shoreward ere it came to grief,—
Such swaggering, slashing Andalusian chief
As Pedro Alvarado, famed of old.
A faithful friend thou wast, now cast away,
Bent with the strain of dire adversity,
Man's great ingratitude thy only wage;
Like some dim Ammiral of a by-gone day,
Unthanked, abandoned in thy useless age,
Untombed afar from the familiar sea!

NIGHTFALL IN THE DESERT

IF on this earth one spot unstained by wars
Be found, it might be here. . . . Through solemn light
The sacred ibis wings his level flight
Where the brown women fill their water-jars.
This seems the home of Peace, where nothing mars
The primal silence æons cannot blight:
The pyramids loom vaster; and the night
Grows splendid with Canopus and new stars:
Yet, as the camels of the caravan
Across the encrimsoned moon in silence file,
The dusky spears of some marauding Khan—
Emerging from yon dark and palm-girt aisle—
Dip, in pursuit, beyond the shadowy Nile:
Lo, even here, intrudes the plunderer, Man!

INADEQUACY

Oh, the sweet sounds anear each starry gate
Of cloudy temples in the ether hung!
Oh, phantom voices from the spirit wrung
When lifted on her airy wings elate!
Ah, for the power such tones to re-create!
I heard the Seraph, but my halting tongue
Pronounced but infelicities; I sung
Mere stammerings, vague and inarticulate.
So one adown weird pathways of the night
Hears in his sleep, by pale ethereal streams,
Music elusively beyond his reach,
And waking, ever fails to trace aright
Strains he hath heard,—they lying beyond speech
In depths of incommunicable dreams.

SESOSTRIS

SOLE Lord of Lords and very King of Kings,
He sits within the desert, carved in stone;
Inscrutable, colossal, and alone,
And ancients than memory of things.
Graved on his front the sacred beetle clings;
Disdain sits on his lips; and in a frown
Scorn lives upon his forehead for a crown.
The affrighted ostrich dares not dust her wings
Anear this Presence. The long caravan's
Dazed camels pause, and mute the Bedouins stare.
This symbol of past power more than man's
Presages doom. Kings look—and Kings despair:
The sceptres tremble in their jeweled hands
And dark thrones totter in the baleful air!

THE SEASONS

IN youth, I thought that April azure-dressed,
Was queen of all the year, her blue eyes beaming
With earliest love—with passionate glances gleaming;
Later, I found in all my errant quest
Nothing so sweet as June; next loved I best
The rich late Summer, with her harvests teeming,
Throned on her slopes of gold; then fell I dreaming,
And worshipped Autumn on her misty crest;
But now the sweetest days are dull December's,
For in the darkness of my twilight room,
I peer into the hearth-fire and the embers,
And see fair visions rising through the gloom—
Ah! dearer than all else the heart remembers—
Faces of those beloved when in their bloom.

FROM THE BATTLEMENTS

A THOUSAND years, I think, I have been dead,
And yet I have not seen her. Can it be
I am to miss her through eternity—
I who on earth thrilled at her lightest tread?
Among the millions here that ever tread
These streets of gold, I surely soon shall see
The Rose that died in her virginity—
Shall find at last my love long vanishèd.
I feel that I shall know her through disguise
Of spiritual splendors. I will stand
Upon the bulwarks, and will watch and wait.
It *must* be, that within the empearlèd gate
Long hath she entered from the dreamless land. . .
Ah! I shall know her by her love-lit eyes.

FROM THE ACRO-CORINTHUS

ON this far-faméd Rock at last I stand—
The sought-for goal of many traveled days;
Before me glimmer in the purple haze,
The dreamy capes and cloudy rims of land
That fringe the fair Ætolia's phantom strand;
Arcadian coasts, dimpled with azure bays,
Loom o'er the sea beyond the beauteous maze
Of clustered islands girt with yellow sand!
Breathing of perished gods, peopled anew,
Parnassus and the stately Salamis
Rise like a dream. Full many a warrior-town
Flashes snow-white, perched on her cliff of blue,
And far off sparkles that imperial crown,—
The immortal splendor of the Acropolis.

THE ANNUNCIATION

A PAINTING BY PIERRE MIGNARD IN POSSESSION OF THE AUTHOR

THE radiant angel stands within her room.
She kneels and listens; on her heaving breast,
To still its flutterings, are her sweet hands pressed,
The while his lips foretell her joyful doom.
Tears—happy tears—are rising, and a bloom
Of maiden blushes clothes her that attest
The Rose she is. The haloed, heavenly guest
Lingers upon his cloud of golden gloom,
And gives to her the lily which he brings.
Each cherub in the aureole above—
Where harps unseen are pealing peace and love—
Smiles with delight, and very softly sings;
While over Mary's head, on whitest wings,
Hovers the presence of the Holy Dove.

NOVEMBER

A STATELY figure walking through the wood;
Her features faded; in her eye a tear;
Her face the grave of beauty, sad, severe;
A queen dethroned, and in her solitude.
Her crimson robes that long the winds withstood,
Now trailing dark in mourning for the year.
In her pale hands the pendent ivy, sere;
Stript of her coronal; in widowhood;
Yet still remembering her magnificence,
She walks superbly through the leafless glades;
She feels the splendor of her opulence
Has faded from her as the leaf's, that fades;
A queen indeed! in royal impotence
She sweeps—how proudly! down into the shades.

THE FRONTIER

O SOLDIER! treading through the long day's heat,
With tattered banner and with drooping crest,
Now as the sun sinks down thy purpled West,—
Thou who hast come so far with aching feet,
Thou who must march and never canst retreat,
Art thou not weary of the bootless quest?
Look'st thou not forward to a time of rest?
Sweet will it be—beyond all telling sweet—
After long marches with red danger fraught;
The wakeful bivouac; the assault and flight;
After thy scars of glory, sore distraught,
To camp afar beyond the plains of sight,
Wrapped in the blanket of a dreamless night,
Out past the pickets and the tents of thought!

WIND ON THE HILLS

GREAT fleets of riven clouds intensely white,
Sailing wind-harried, 'thwart the lowering sky;
On the wild River, where the islands lie,
Long levels of insufferable light;
Cloud-shadows, moving in portentous flight,
Dimming the crimson of the steeps near by
And glooming golden ridges, crested high,
As the dread pinions of Apollyon might:
Weird slopes of tawny grasses, all astir,
As if some monster crept along the hill
Covered with hide of panther-colored fur;
While in the blustering air, grown bleak and chill—
The only wraith of Summer lingering still—
Floats the blown milkweed's ermined gossamer.

ON THE CORNWALL BEACH

HERE once were inland meads, and rolling plain:
From many a castle's rich, armorial gate
The plumèd Knights rode forth with pride elate,
And lovelorn Ladies sighed in sweet disdain.
This the broad land where Lyonesse had lain—
Where mythic Kings yet move in shadowy state—
But now 't is sunken and obliterate,
Whelmed by the slow encroachment of the main:

Oh, meadows of our Youth! Ah, marvelous coasts
Where beauty wandered down the golden ways
And love still seemed eternal,—ye are ghosts!
Oh, shores once sanctified by love's own tears,
Sunk are ye 'neath the devastating days—
The surge and inundation of the years.

THE SILENT GUEST

To-NIGHT, O Death, I feel thee near again;
Cease peering in, but enter at the door—
If thou must enter—as thou didst of yore.
I did not call thee in this night of rain,
Yet thou art here—Oh, may it be in vain!
And yet, alas! full many times before
Thou hast been near—so near! that now no more
Thou seem'st a foe, but one to ease all pain.
I know thy face so well that I could weep;
For thou art with me more than any friend.
I am too young to sink to thy black Deep;
Yet, if I must, Oh, gently o'er me bend,
Delude me into dreams that have no end,
Until I feel—it is not Death, but Sleep!

THE NYMPH

In quiet stillness of a wild-wood dell
Knee-deep with fern, beneath the hemlock screen,
A brook, sliding the mossy rocks atween,
Plunged into foam and music, as it fell
Sheer to a pool, dark as a cloistered cell:
'T was in the afternoon, in this demesne,
I saw the goddess coming through the green;
The dazzle of her beauty's miracle
Smote me as with a gleaming scymetar:
She alighted . . . panting, while her sister wings
Pulsed . . . slowly—as a butterfly's that are
A-poise upon a flower the summer brings;
I knew her by immortal murmurings:
'T was Psyche, white-limbed, glowing like a star!

LOOKING AT THE WEST

YE Evening Clouds on which I sadly gaze,
Mine eyelids wet with untumultuous tears,
Because your beauty's poignant pathos sears
Itself into the soul, the while the ways
Are rich with ruby and with chrysoprase—
Ye clouds of evening, in those promised years,
In the great oriel of some grander spheres,
Shall not such splendor glad our heavenly days?
God's smile it is that floods the sunset sky;
He cheers us with this parting, lest we might
Be daunted by the Dark's immensity.
How could we bear the absence of the light,
Unless, each eve, down-bending from on high,
From those great Doors of Heaven He beamed, "Good night?"

LOST ISLES

'T WAS long ago we roamed a summer sea
With pictured sails that fanned the fragrant air,
Far o'er the waters, yet we knew not where;
Sudden an isle, dim as a memory,
Called like a siren to us, until we
Lay in her bosom an hour, at anchor there . . .
We sailed afar; then searched in sheer despair,
But never more we found where it could be!

O lips of those who loved us, lightly pressed,
Where are you now, since life is growing gray?
Hands laid in ours; dear faces once caressed
And left forever; and some tender breast
Where we were anchored, by sweet Love, a day,—
Lost Isles are these from which we sailed away!

BEREFT

My life was in its Autumn, as I lay
 Dreaming upon an upland o'er the sea.
Lonely I was as Lydian Niobe
 When all her pearls Apollo took away.
Then came a beauteous woman fair as day,
 Who gave herself and all her love to me;
Anon sweet children clambered round my knee
 Eager for kisses,—and the time seemed May.
These children's children came, and I was grown
 Agèd and worn, but still on them I smiled
For love of them and of the mother mild.
Sudden I woke—childless, forlorn, alone. . . .
O Poësy! canst thou for this atone?—
Thou who hast reft me thus of wife and child?

THE DOORS

As through the Void we went, I heard his plumes
Strike on the darkness. It was passing sweet
To hold his hand and hear that thin air beat
Against our pinions, as we winged those glooms
Of Ebon, through which Atropos still dooms
Each soul to pass. Then presently our feet
Found footing on a ledge of dark retreat,
And opposite appeared two doors of tombs
Seen by the star upon the angel's head
That made dim twilight; there I caught my breath:
"Why pause we here?" The angel answering said,
"The journey ends. These are the Doors of Death;
Lo, now they open, inward, for the dead."
And then a Voice,—“Who next that entereth?”

BLIGHTED

Not like this stranded hulk along the bay
That rots by inches as the breakers pour
Their ebb and flow athwart the sunken floor,—
Not in such slow and ignominious way
Didst thou, O Soul, approach thy final day;
But struggling with the surges evermore,
Amid the havoc and the deafening roar,
Thou in our sight didst still defy decay,
And, on the foaming billows to thy grave,
Blown by the storms of thine imperious will,
Wrecked by the blasts of Thought, didst fearless ride;
Then, from the crest of Life's ensanguined wave,
Though rudely buffeted, yet battling still,
Didst sink to darkness in unconquered pride.

THE TRIO

WITH wings upraised, and trumpet pointed high,
She poised upon the summit of a cloud;
"My name is Glory," blew her trump aloud,
"Who follow in my steps shall never die!"
Then, at that blare, one rose and fixed his eye
Upon her, drawing from his skull the shroud,
And spake with voice, that though it whispered, cowed,
"Nay, all are mine forever!—Death, am I!"
Thereat a baleful Power filled the air,
Shook all the shores of their dominion,
And cried from out the blackness to them there:
"I am the Vortex named Oblivion,
Agèd I was ere Chaos had begun;
Glory and Death! behold *me*. . . . and despair!"

THE SOVEREIGNS

THEY who create rob death of half its stings;
Their life is given for the Muse's sake;
Of Thought they build their palaces, and make
Enduring entities and beauteous things;
They are the Poets—they give airy wings
To shapes marmorean; or they overtake
The Ideal with the brush, or, soaring, wake
Far in the rolling clouds their glorious strings.
The Poet is the only potentate;
His sceptre reaches o'er remotest zones;
His thought remembered and his golden tones
Shall, in the ears of nations uncreate,
Roll on for ages and reverberate
When Kings are dust beside forgotten thrones.

ON THE TWILIGHT HEADLAND

THESEUS AND ARIADNE

DEAR Love, lean nearer—let your finger-tips
Reach till they touch the rose within my palm.
Through the hushed dusk I feel the fragrant balm
Of your faint breathing as the tired breast dips
And rises, drowsful as a bee that sips
Honey too avid from the numbing flower. . . .
Close the sad eyes, and for one little hour
Let slumber soothe the dear, leave-taking lips.
Ah, sweet! were it not better for each heart
Before the cruel years achieve their will—
For us, who must irrevocably part,
To pass the lintel of the door of Death
Lip touching lip, I breathing faintly still
The poignant sweetness of your fading breath?

THE CATARACT

SUPREME! from out the hollow of Thy hand
These torrents pour. These glories and these glooms,
These splendors wove on Thine eternal looms,
Are fragments of Thy power—Thy command
Made visible. Thou didst but move Thy wand
Above the void and darkness, and the wombs
Of Chaos birthed this wonder that now fumes
In columned spray unutterably grand!
As in the abyss the mighty waters pour,
The rocky canyon to its summit shakes,
And all the valley trembles under us;
High o'er the mist the screaming eagles soar,
As in the abysm the boiling torrent wakes
Her everlasting anthem thunderous.

LONGFELLOW

MELODIOUS Poet, on auspicious days

When o'er thy chaste and polished pages bending,

I read each sweet line to its golden ending,

Bound am I by the fetters of thy lays.

And as I follow every happy phrase—

Music and beauty to thy matter lending—

I seem to listen to a brooklet wending

Its lyric journey over pebbly ways.

Full oft thy verse sounds like a river flowing

Through windy reed-lands to the distant lea;

Anon, thy voice above the storm-cloud going,

Peals as the sounding trumpets of the sea;

Or, like some mediæval clarion blowing

From bannered turrets, rings out silverly.

THE SEA

THE plunging, dark-maned Sea bellows and gores
Like some infuriated buffalo band
That sweeps headlong, and devastates the land!
A hungry creature round the world she roars.
Her maw is ravenous as the Minotaur's.
In the deep cemetery of her sand
Rolls the smooth skull, and rests the mariner's hand.
The Kraken sleeps portentous on her floors.
She lifts vast voices. In her awful glooms
Peal the deep thunders of eternity.
Her soul is as a vortex, and she fumes
Restless as mortal man. Doth she foresee
The Seal of Doom is on her as she booms
Within her monstrous caverns, ceaselessly?

TWILIGHT FROM THE LAWN

TO SAMUEL WADDINGTON, ESQ.

DEEP in the west the slender crescent's rim
Sinks in the orange of the afterglow;
The crane uncurves his neck and peers below
Through amber pools. Upon the river's brim
A line of silver lingers. On the limb
Hoots the lone owl; and high above, the crow
Wings to the wood most wearily and slow;
The hills are purpling,—dimmer and more dim.
Against the glory of the going light
Stand the cathedral spires of the pines;
The swallows, whirling in concentric lines,
Swoop down the ivied chimney for the night,
While through the pane—a star that will not roam—
Twinkles the lamp,—the Hesperus of home.

A WATTEAU BEAUTY

1716

BETWEEN the vases, with beribboned cane,
She comes with buoyant, supercilious air;
Within her eyes that glittering light which ne'er
From penance sprang. Ah, never will she deign
To heed your glance, this lovely scatter-brain,—
Saucy and giddy, haughty, frail and fair!
Pray note, she seems to blush before you speak;
Is 't rouge too thick upon her face and lips—
The color heightened by white-powdered hair—
Or that last sparkling goblet of Champagne?
Dainty she is, from the gloved finger-tips
To the black patch upon her baby cheek:
Coquettish, piquant, roguishly inane,—
This modish Circe of the marble stair.

POLYPHEMUS TO ULYSSES

REVENGE! Revenge! Ye have shut out the light—
Burned out my single eye the while I slept;
But for each tear of blood that I have wept
Ye shall give forth a groan! . . . I will incite
The avenging Sea against you, and will smite
You utterly . . . Ai! Ai! not Jove shall intercept
My gathering wrath, ye treacherous wolves, that crept
In secret to my cave, and made day—night!
Now by my sire Neptune's oozy locks
And forkèd trident; by the boisterous shell—
The demi-dolphin Triton's roaring horn—
I swear 't were better ye had ne'er been born,
For I will whelm you with down-thundering rocks
Deeper than Trojan plummet ever fell!

THE END OF ALL

MIDNIGHT was on the summits, and the lake—
Livid with lightning. In the cavernous cloud
The demons of the thunder roared aloud
And made the everlasting mountains quake.
Then of the spirits, hovering in the gloom,
I asked the end of Man—of Man, that proud
Imperious master with high front unbowed—
“What, at the last, on earth shall be his doom?”
They answered, stern, “Not by submerging seas
Of ice, nor flame from crater nor from sky,
Shall Nations perish, but—from utter dearth;
Like wastes of withering grasses shall they lie,
Famine shall mow their trillions of increase
Leaving one ghastly swarth around the earth!”

READING FROM MILTON

LEAVE the dim casement, where the twilight gloom,
Strange with great stars, holds us in charmèd spell;
Light the soft lamp, as in some hermit cell,
And stir the back-log that it may illumè
The brow of Pallas with a roseate bloom;
Then let the Poet sound his classic shell
Attuned to murmur the Pierian spell,
And flood with melody the quiet room:
Turn the rich page, and while the embers glow,
Through archèd groves Etrurian slowly tread,
Reading the thunderous numbers, doubly dear;
Full let the organ-tones of Comus flow,
Nor fail to render that "melodious tear"—
The Dorian threnody for Lycid, dead.

WINTER WOODS

'T is sweet to wander through new-fallen snow
Far in the wooded upland miles from town,
With head bent forward and eyes looking down
All unenticed by the surrounding show—
The stir of small birds in the laurel low,
Or partridge whirring by on wings of brown,—
Still wearing on the forehead as a crown
The recollections of the long ago;
And while the feet are moving 'mid the cold,
To pace beneath the olive and the vine;
At every step to tread through temples old;
To lie on Capri, basking by the pine,
And see far Naples where the sunset brine
Makes her a pearl within a shell of gold!

THE DREAMERS

OH, not by Arethusan fountains fair,
Nor silver rivers musically fleet;
Ah, not on mountains trod by fabled feet,
Though flushed the snowy tops in sunset air;
They journey not by them—not there—not there!
On classic ground no need,—though that were sweet,—
For them to roam in body who may greet
The spirits of Immortals everywhere.
Lovely the vales of earth, her hills and dells,
Yet they, oft-times, on other slopes are led
Where Fancy ever lives, a conjurer;
Their footsteps fall in azure paths o'erhead,
And they, entranced, listening to faint-heard bells,
Wander afar in fields that never were.

“THE THRONE OF DEATH”

A PAINTING BY G. F. WATTS, R.A.

SOVEREIGN and beggar come, and each alone,
Trophy or burthen bringing to Death's feet.
The mailèd warrior, proudly, as is meet,
Yields his unconquered blade. The glittering crown
That power imperial wears, a king lays down
Submissively. The Child,—the Mother sweet,—
And Age forlorn, bend to the winding-sheet
Which draws the World to that mysterious Throne.
The Judgment Book lies open but unread,
For who would gaze upon those cryptic things?
The Angel Death, inscrutable above,
Broods awesomely beneficent,—his wings
Over himself and all the region spread
Darkness, not unilluminate with love.

AN EAST RAIN ON THE ISLAND
OF CYPRUS

LET me walk here upon this headland high
Which jutting heavenward overlooks the main,
And feel upon my face the pelting rain
From soft savannas 'neath an Orient sky.
What cloudless dome can with this vapor vie?
For summer sunshine now I feel disdain;
The driven mist, as thine, is my domain,
O dove-gray sea-bird drifting dimly by!
Ah, shut me round and hide the half-seen ships;
Come, soft-blown rain, from tropic fields of rice,—
From plummy capes of far Arabian seas;
Bring wafts of Malabar unto my lips;
Beat on my brow with airs that touched the teas
By palmy Ceylon and the isles of spice!

ON THE BLUFFS

THE headlands here are in a sunset glow;
I read your letter, but I fail to find
The old sweet by-paths of a kindred mind
Down which your thoughts made music, long ago.
Ah, love! a worldling of the world you grow!
But I seek nobler heights, and now am blind
To words that still can wound, then let the wind
Whirl these torn scraps of pathos far below!
I am as one who in a waking dream,
Strolling at eve picks up an Indian dart,—
Dulled by long pain, indifferent to discern
How once it pierced some innocent victim's heart,—
Yet, with a half-regretful unconcern,
Skims it beyond the cliff, sheer to mid-stream.

THE BLACK PORTALS

SPIRIT of mine that soon must venturous spread
Through voids unknown thy feeble, fluttering plumes,
Hast thou no fear to wing those endless glooms?
No apprehension nor misgivings dread?
Those realms unfathomed of the speechless dead,
Which never gleam of eldest star illumines—
Lethean caverns that the Soul entombs—
Art thou not awed such sombre vasts to tread?
My Soul replied: "Wisdom hath made all things—
Life and the end of life, He gives to thee.
Down Death's worn path the mightiest still have trod.
Where laureled poets and anointed Kings
Have gone for ages, it is good to be:
Rest thou contented with the will of God."

THE MONARCH

Down in the cloudy towers of my sleep
A dungeon loomed wherein I heard the groans
Of those long ages prisoned—moans on moans;
And peering further in the noisome deep,
In which no rays of daylight e'er could creep,
I saw a skeleton of whitened bones—
A mighty king's—the conqueror of thrones—
Chained to the walls within that donjon-keep.
His crown still blazed upon him, golden-dull,
Whence, through the dark, glared jewels, tiger-eyed;
In awe I stood, and trembling, held my breath;
And then a Voice—not his who there had died—
Hissed from the hollow of that whitened skull:
“I am the King of Kings,—undying Death!”

TO AN OLD VENETIAN PAINTING

WHO *was* she—this rare Beauty of appealing face? . . .

The eyes are laden with the weight of Love's fond burden,

The heart, with tremulous hope of Love's alluring guerdon.

Had she some wound,—some grief which nothing would erase,—

She whose impassioned look is raised in suppliant grace?

Perchance some erring penitent in saintly adoration,

Or Doge's wilful daughter offering supplication

In all the sumptuous beauty of her languorous race?

The plaintive mouth is saddened now from farewell-taking,

The sob still lingers in her smile,—the eyes brim o'er,

As if sweet love, with her, had broken faith and trust.

How *could* such beauty be unless her heart were breaking? . . .

Peace! draw the veil: seek no revealment: ask no more:

Such loveliness shall sanctify her very dust.

THE WEDDING MORN

LET the sweet Dawn kiss darkness from the ground;
The glorious sun rise like a globe of fire
Above the sea, and in his strong desire
Rosy the gables of her home, and round
Her lattice linger; breezes from the Sound
Turn all the waste of reeds into one lyre
For her; and let the swarm of marsh-birds choir,
Till from the rushes comes the wild redound!
And let old Ocean cease his rude uproar,
And waft in pearls and all his roseate shells;
While on the top of his foam-crested swells
Let the poised curl hang whiter than before,—
For here to-day, upon this Island shore,
Comes the sweet melody of marriage bells!

THE COUNTRY BURIAL—NOVEMBER

THE day is dull, the lingering leaf is sped
From tree and vine. The flowers are gone, and weeds
Border the fence-row, as the year recedes.
In drizzling mist slowly the mourners tread,
Following the hearse at the procession's head
Up to the church-yard, far above the meads,
There where the parson by the new grave reads
"Dust unto dust"—and all the world seems dead:

But here come troops of children, young and sweet,
Down the steep lane;—they are the Future's flowers
Which soon shall bloom for other eyes than ours
In years to be; while all about the feet
Are silent monitors of Nature's powers—
And in the ground sprouts the next summer's wheat.

INSUFFICIENCY

THE spirit cannot spread at will her wings;
The dust clings to us, holding us to earth;
Some vague degeneracy of spiritual birth
Grapples us to the ground, and often clings
Like lead about us; Heliconian springs
Then gush in vain; while ever joy and mirth
Seem palsied by an universal dearth:
Yet sometimes, in such vein, the Poet sings.
And if he cannot always touch the mark
The soul has set, it is to be forgiven;
Nor does that skyey minstrel, the rapt lark,
Chant ever at the very gate of heaven,
But oft, by changing mood of spirit driven,
Pipes plaintive notes, low by his nest, at dark.

SUNRISE ON THE MARSH

DEEP down the sky, as yet Day sleeps serene;
She does not stir, but lies as in a swoon.
Silent the marshes, save at times the croon
Of some lone heron in the swamp's dark green.
The lyric fingers of the wind, unseen,
Play on the lute-strings of the reeds a tune
To be remembered! All the glassed lagoon
Is hushed as in the desert's void demesne;
When, under the horizon far, I hear
Aurora's phantom heralds wind the horn,
As low above the dying twilight's bier
A few faint-flushed and feathery clouds appear;
Then—o'er the far savanna's utmost bourn—
Flare the wide wings of the flamingo morn!

A PICTURE OF MY MOTHER

UPON this old daguerreotype appears
Thy face, my Mother, crowned with wondrous hair.
What reconciliation in thine air;
And what a saintly smile, as if thy fears
The Lord had taken from thee, and thy tears!
'Tis my delight still to believe thee fair;
And thou wast loved we know,—in mute despair
We saw my Father's eyes, at eighty years,
O'erflow with love as oft we spoke of thee—
We spoke of thee, I said, not he—not he!
He *could* not speak! . . . Oh, peace be with thee, then,
Madonna-like, thy babe upon thy knee! . . .
My gentle Mother, lost on earth to me,
Shall I not know thee somewhere once again?

THE VICTOR

I AM the Shadow,—I whose brooding wings
Are gray with æons. I depopulate
The world; and all yon peopled stars await
My ravenous scythe. Through charnel dust of kings
I come, spurning the scepters. Though the stings
Of adders still are mine, I bear no hate,
But am beneficent. Minion of Fate,
I am the mausoleum of all things.
Stern and implacable sovereign of the dead,
But friend to him down-trampled in the strife,
I, shrouded, cryptic, through the darkness go
Silent for ever: yet it hath been said
I lift the portals leading unto Life
And thou, at last,—it may be thou shalt know.

THE FAN

DEAR Lady, never was a gift more meet
Than yours this sultry day—a palm-leaf fan.
The traveler journeying on from Karaman
To Cairo, southward, scarcely feels more heat
Than we at home,—there the dark-sandaled feet
And the swart turbaned faces African
Scorch on the camels in the caravan,
While here, to-day, men drop upon the street.
In curtained coolness of this quiet room,
With half-closed eyes, I lean back in my chair,
And slowly fanning, tread a land of dreams.
I seem to scent the Arabian roses' bloom;
Soft gales of Ceylon reach me from her streams,
And Persian zephyrs stir the silent air.

BELLONA

TO HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ

ROUND her the deafening cannon crashed and roared
 'Mid sulphur smoke that blotted out the sky;
Upon the maimed she turned her gloating eye
 And reveled where the red-beaked vultures gored.
Anear was seen the onset of a horde
 Wading in slaughter 'mid heart-rending moans;
Gladly she heard from dying lips their groans,
 And clenched, in reeking hands, her dripping sword.
Scarlet her sandals, saturate with the blood
 That flowed from countless vassals and from kings;
Round her whirled dust of empires and of thrones;
While from her pyramid of human bones—
 "Havoc!" she screamed, and 'mid the carnage stood
 Waving the horror of her crimson wings!

THE SONNET

STILL let a due reserve the Muse attend
Who threads the Sonnet's labyrinth. As some bell
That tolls for vespers in a twilight dell,
So in the octave, let her voice suspend
Her pomp of phrase. The sestet may ascend
Slowly triumphant, like an organ-swell
In opulent grandeur rising—pause, and dwell
With gathering glories to its dolphin end:

So, oft at eve around the sunset doors,
From upiled splendors of some crimsoned cloud
Storm-based with dark—unrolling like a scroll—
Forth the accumulated thunder pours
Across the listening valley long and loud,
With low reverberations, roll on roll!

IN LEAF-DRIFTED AISLES

I LOVE to linger on the hill-side brown
When all the verdure of the year is dead,—
What time the sumac drops her darts of red,—
With some dear friend, far from the noise of town;
And pacing slowly on the slopes, look down
Upon the dreamy islands that are wed
In bonds of blue together, while o'erhead
The glowing twilight settles as a crown.
Sweet as this is, yet I more dearly love,
Deep in the umber of the woodland ways,
Afar to wander, silent, and alone;
For ah! as through the dry leaves on I move,
I hear lost footsteps, loved in other days,
And voices touch me of the old sweet tone!

AWAITING SUMMONS

FILLED with foreboding awe, beneath the trees
He waits the Voice. The seven seals of dread
Are set. No word of comfort may be said.
Above him e'en the gentle summer breeze
Brings apprehension, nor can hope appease,
As ever hangs above his conscious head—
Held by a more attenuated thread—
The horror of the sword of Damocles.

So one within a donjon hourly waits,
Doomed to the block, yet knowing not the day;
Hears unreturning prisoners leave their room,
And ominous uproar round the inner gates,
Yet still unsummoned, slowly wastes away
In dire anticipation of his doom.

THE FADING LIGHT

THE dim aurèola of the western glow
Lingers above the azure mountain rim,
And the sweet huntress, now a virgin slim,
Draws, in immortal fields, her silver bow,
Fair as in far Illyria long ago
In immemorial days divinely dim.
In lessening light the islands, glimmering, swim;
As twilight folds her pinions, soft and slow,
The gateways of the night begin to ope,
And through them throng as in a dazzling dream
The stars, that up the gentle evening slope
Through amaranthine meads of heliotrope
Tread on imperial, haughty and supreme,
Shod with those sandals of eternal beam.

A DREARY DAY

FOR Autumn splendors now I search in vain;
The crimson thyrsus of the sumac bud,
And the haw's berries, dashed with Summer's blood,
Are dripping in the dull November rain.
No tasseled wigwams of the corn remain;
The streams run yellow with the swollen flood,
And on the hill-side road the golden mud
Falls from the felloes of the laboring wain.
'Mid drizzling mist, upon its woodland perch
Where sombre pines are pointing to the skies,
Watched over by the quiet Quaker church,
With mounds unmarked the little grave-yard lies;
The only mourner there, the pendent birch,
Drops tears to-day above long-buried eyes.

THE EMPTY HOUSE

STAND here, I pray you, at this iron gate
Beyond the house—this gateway grim of stone;
Dear as you are, let me go in alone
Among the ghostly chambers, where await
The sacred Presences, long called by fate
Beyond my touch, but not beyond the zone
Of sweet companionship. There is a tone
Of exquisite sadness in these halls sedate,
Unheard but by the heart. In upper rooms
I hear faint footfalls, silent for long years;
Lost lips bend down anear me. Through the glooms
Loved faces throng the stairway, sweet with tears;
And from the walls, where nothing now appears,
Each dim ancestral portrait looks and looms.

THE PASSING OF THE QUEEN

1901

WHAT is the requiem heard upon the breeze
From the dark forests of Laurentian lands?
What note of mourning from the golden sands
Where Indus winds along the templed leas? . . .
"The Queen is dead!" the people's threnodies
Sound o'er the grieving world! Columbia stands
In heart-felt sorrow, as she joins her hands
With those who mourn by far Australian seas.
Peace to the Queen! Oh, new-born, may She meet
With long-lost faces! Through the endless days
Find youth again, find life, with love replete,
In amaranthine meadows where She strays
And hears celestial music, strangely sweet,
By the still waters and the lilled ways!

TO THE NEW CENTURY

THE accursèd rage for wealth, devoid of ruth,
Fumes in the breast of peoples and of kings:
Is this the guerdon that the Century brings—
Insatiate avarice with relentless tooth?
Where is the promise of the Nation's youth,—
The dreams Icarian—the auroral wings?
That earlier quest of immaterial things,—
High principle, religion, honor, truth?
What shall relume our spiritual night
While brazen Progress, cloaking banal greed,
Crushes the soul 'neath her Mammonian car?
What dayspring rises for the Spirit's need?—
What of the Soul's inviolable star?
Torch of the Years! is *this* thy vaunted Light?

FEEDING THE PIGEONS

VENICE

SHE is a chrysolite! her manners, too,
Are pure Venetian, haughty, yet endearing.
Didst ever see, my Claudio, such a bearing?
Just watch her as the pigeons round her woo
For more caresses,—voice like some dove's coo,
And with that face so saint-like yet so daring—
By Bacchus! as you say here in your swearing,
She is as perfect as a drop of dew!
Yet she is of the South—the counterpart
Of vengeance with its hidden venom'd dart . . .
Hush! for the gargoyles hear! . . . Though white as curds
That sweet soft hand—the hand that feeds the birds—
If you should hint about it certain words,
Would plunge its poisoned poniard through your heart.

EVENING

'T is sweet at evening when the light of Mars
Glow softly earthward over vale and dune,
To saunter, solaced by the quiet tune
The evening sings with no discordant jars;
The cattle, dreaming, stand about the bars,
Where ripe wheat yellows all the hills of June,
What time the silver sickle of the moon
Reaps down, in golden swaths, the western stars.
The twilight to her purple caves has flown,
While dying thunders roll o'er dale and scar;
In the still pool the bittern sees the star,
And voices of the night begin to moan;
A single bell has ceased to toll afar,
And Silence listens, stiller than a stone.

THE TRAVELERS

TO A CLASS OF GIRL-STUDENTS

How oft, at morn, from some lone Alpine door,
I watched the traveler toiling up the height,
His feet among the roses, but his sight
Fixed on the summits where the eagles soar.
"Steep was his path; thunderous the torrent's roar;
Upward he went with toil, yet with delight,
Until I lost him on the peaks of white,
And never in the lowland saw him more.
And from these dewy valleys, even so,
Long have we seen you scaling cliff and scar
Upon the Alps of Learning; roses now
Bloom round you,—yet, mount higher—higher far,
Fair travelers! pass the peaks, and onward go
Where knowledge, lustrous, leads you like a star.

THE VOYAGERS

A REMINISCENCE OF THE ODYSSEY

THEY leave the Cyclops roaring in his cave,
Bereft of sight; then to the marge they creep
And set their sails, and all the triremes sweep
Suddenly seaward on the luminous wave.
About the prows the lithesome mermaids lave
Star-crownèd foreheads, while the slumbering deep
Heaves with the rocks hurled downward from the steep,
And at the galley bends the shackled slave.
The Auroran twilight, soft and silvery fair,
Spreads o'er the moving water silently,
Where dolphins sport upon the rolling swell;
While, rising fulgent from the glimmering sea,
The Horses of the Morning paw the air,
And far away, a Triton winds his shell.

THE CARYATIDES OF THE RUINED FANE

THEY SPEAK

ONLY the blue of Hellas still doth bend
 Unchanged above; only the ancient seas
 Murmur, at times, of fallen deities:
 No suppliants at the altar hither wend;
No longer now the incense doth ascend
 Lingering amid the sculpture in the frieze:
 We bear our burden and the gods appease,
 Saying to man, "Endure unto the end."
The Nations loom and fade: kings wax and wane:
 Anchored and patient, here we stand alone
 Eternal symbols, scorning still to swerve.
Time passes as a shadow: we remain
 Immortal and immutable in stone,
 More beautiful than beauty, as we serve.

THE SPECTRE

As to some clock upon the dusky floor
 Standing within the hall 'mid carven chairs,
 Where, stately moving down the sumptuous stairs,
 Funeral and bridal-train trooped by of yore—
A stranger comes at night; opens its door
 And stops the pendulum, and even dares
 To mar the works, then through the darkness glares
 And listens for the beating made before;
So, on some midnight when the house is still,
 A Spectre, gliding with his furtive tread,—
 When I in slumber lie and fear no ill,—
Shall stop this heart, and leaning down his head
 Shall listen o'er my breast, and pause, until
 No sound ensuing, he shall leave me—dead.

MILTON

His feet were shod with music, and had wings
Like Hermes; far upon the peaks of song
His footfalls sounded silverly along;
The dull world blossomed into beauteous things
Where'er he trod; and Heliconian springs
Gushed from the rocks he touched; round him a throng
Of fair invisibles, seraphic, strong,
Struck Orphean murmurs out of golden strings;
But he, spreading keen pinions for a white
Immensity of radiance and of peace,
Uplooming to the empyreal infinite,
Far through ethereal fields and zenith seas,
High, with strong wing-beats and with eagle ease,
Soared in a solitude of glorious light!

PRODIGALS

As some crazed king upon a wild sea-shore
Takes from his coffers hoard of hidden gold,
His crown and sceptre, and his gems untold,
With all the royal orders which he wore,
And hurls them, one by one, into the roar
And hunger of the sea; and then, when old,
Comes to his senses, shivers in the cold,
And mourns his kingdom's treasures evermore:
So we, unwitting of the wealth of years,
Here by life's ocean fling away our gems—
Sceptres of youth, and manhood's diadems;
Like fools we waste them with no future fears;
Reason returns, and us too late condemns—
The beggared monarchs of a realm of tears!

A LANDSCAPE BY REMBRANDT

AN ETCHING BY BURNET DEBAINES

A DRIFT of storm obscures the upper air,
And lower, glows a waste of dubious light;
It seems as if the legions of the night
Were slowly loosened from some cloudy lair.
Dim figures climb the winding cliff-path stair
And lose themselves in shadows which affright;
The gloom is ominous, and the inner sight
Sees half revealèd spectres flitting there.
The sombre river lies as if asleep,
Save where the boatman with his vaporous oar
Troubles the waters. By the dusky shore
Two timid children stand alone and still;
While on the weird crest of the windy steep
Arise the white arms of the ghostly mill.

ACROSS THE YEARS

THE old rememberable barn—how gray
It loomed above the orchard and the spring!—
The orchard where the robin used to sing,
Building his nest beneath the blossomed spray.
Where are the rose-bud maidens of that day?
Some, like the birds, afar have taken wing;
Some sleep below, but memories oft they bring
Faint as remembered odors of the hay.

* Ah, yet once more across the shadowy years
She meets me in the gloaming! Down the lane
We hear the dropping of the pasture bars;
It is the trysting hour, and kindly stars
Bloom in the twilight trees . . . O Love! O Tears!
O Youth that was—that will not come again!

TO RICHARD HENRY STODDARD
POET AND CRITIC

ON THE 74TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH

O POET! while the Years in veiled array—
As stately past the stern procession goes—
Drop on thy head, at seventy-four, the snows,
Where once they placed the blossoms in thy May,—
Let me—unheeded Singer of to-day—
Offer my tribute, with this mountain rose,
To one who is preëminent of those
That keep the Muse's temple from decay.
For Song's unpurchasable Knight thou art,
Who, with thy pen as with a sword of fire,
Guardest the sacred gates of Poësy;
Therefore, O Master of the tender lyre,
Accept the homage which I bring to thee
With hope of long life from my heart of heart!

THE BATTLE FIELD

GETTYSBURG

THOSE were the conquered, still too proud to yield—
These were the victors, yet too poor for shrouds!
Here scarlet Slaughter slew her countless crowds
Heaped high in ranks where'er the hot guns pealed.
The brooks that wandered through the battle-field
Flowed slowly on in ever-reddening streams;
Here where the rank wheat waves and golden gleams,
The dreadful squadrons, thundering, charged and reeled.
Within the blossoming clover many a bone
Lying unsepulchred, has bleached to white;
While gentlest hearts that only love had known,
Have ached with anguish at the awful sight;
And War's gaunt Vultures that were lean, have grown
Gorged in the darkness in a single night!

INDIAN SUMMER

How still the groves! And has some silver flute
Ceased suddenly? The Summer days are sped;
The earth is quiet; and far overhead
All the blue altitudes of air are mute;
While those Æolian harps are destitute
Of music, for sweet Melody is dead,
And song to Silence in the woods is wed.
No longer now we hear the thrush salute
The laurels with soft-throated ecstasies.
Where Summer hummed with buzzing sound, we see
The straw-built hives, filled with immurmurous bees.
No sound is heard; but soft and tenderly,
Down the dim aisles of fading memory,
Drifts the deep plaint of countless threnodies.

ISOLATION

I stood aside and watched the countless throng
Ascend the windings of the luminous street;
Lovers were there whose pure and saintly feet
Kept rhythmic measure as they wound along. *
Glad groups of little children played among
The fadeless flowers; Madonna-mothers sweet
Cooed o'er their babes; while from their golden seat
The harping choir sang some heavenly song.
In midst of these, enlaureled, but apart,
Dim forms moved slowly on and softly sighed
As though they searched for dreams beyond them flown:
The Poets they, who, each with aching heart,
Upon the earth had lonely lived and died,
And who, e'en there in heaven, seemed still alone.

ANTONY IN EGYPT

No—no, not death! my rapturous Queen, not death!

'T is nature's error when two lovers die;

As thy great heart in one wild ecstasy

Wells through these lips unto my soul, my breath
Burns with dark passion as it uttereth,

"Enough, Love's promised immortality!

Heaven is in mine arms, not in the sky,

O royal mate, when thou art there!" it saith.

Not death to-night! Ah, Egypt, no—not so!

More life—more love! not death—more love instead!

Till we shall feel Love's burning flame impart
To plighted lips his full impassioned glow,—

Yet, on the instant, should Love strike thee dead,

That instant would the dagger find my heart!

THE BENEFACTOR

TO THE DISCOVERER OF ANÆSTHESIA

THOU, like to Æsculapius' shining sire,
That golden-tressèd god—the Delphian—
Hast slain the serpent, and freed suffering man
From slow immitigable tortures dire.
No longer now, on Agony's dreaded pyre
Men writhe, since from our soil American
Thou cam'st, thou later Good Samaritan,
Whose legacy the days unborn shall choir!
So once that wise magician—robbed by him
The injurious king of proud Parthenopè—
From his demesne drove torment with his wand;
So once the Son—diviner paradigm—
Spake softly his miraculous command
And drave the demons down into the sea!

THE THRESHING-FLOOR

OFT may you see within some barn's wide door,
In winter underneath the snowy eaves,
A glowing depth of summer's opened sheaves,
And moving horses, tethered four and four,
Tramping in endless circles, o'er and o'er,—
A seeming bootless task, as one believes;
Yet at the end, when day her work achieves,
Behold the yellow wheat upon the floor!
My soul, be thou contented, and full fain,
Though yearning for the boundless prairies sweet,
Still round life's circle trudge, with willing feet;
And from the sheaves of trial and of pain,
By patience strong and by endurance meet,
Tramp out, ere evening comes, the golden grain!

FIAT LUX

THEN that dread angel near the awful throne,
Leaving the seraphs ranged in flaming tiers,
Winged his dark way through those unpinioned spheres,
And on the void's black beetling edge, alone,
Stood with raised wings, and listened for the tone
Of God's command to reach his eager ears,
While Chaos wavered, for she felt her years
Unsceptered now in that convulsive zone.
Night trembled. And as one hath oft beheld
A lamp within a vase light up its gloom,
So God's voice lighted him, from heel to plume:
"Let there be light!" It said, and Darkness, quelled,
Shrunk noiseless backward in her monstrous womb
Through vasts unwinnowed by the wings of eld!

NICARAGUA

PROPOSED ROUTE OF THE ISTHMIAN CANAL, 1900

I, LAKE of Nicaragua, lifted here
High on the mountains from my sister seas,
Have yet a yearning to be joined to these,
And feel at last my reunion near.
Far off arise and echo, silver clear,
Clarions of Hope; and on the island-leas
Hymns of return hum through my tropic trees,—
O day so long desired, soon appear!
Then many a ship that floats the stripes and stars
May cross my waters as with angel wings
Grain-laden for the famine-stricken East;
But battle-squadrons, bent on bloody wars,
Shall come, alas, the while that senseless Beast
Ramps in the heart of Peoples and of Kings.

THE STORM-CLOUDS

IN MEMORY OF SAMUEL S. HALDEMAN, LL. D.

I STAND beside the River as the night
Unrolls her sombre curtain o'er the day;
The pyres within the west have paled away
And only left their embers, dimly bright,
To illume the sullen hill-top's purple height;
Then, from behind the crags, the clouds of gray—
A troop of lions held too long at bay—
Arise from out their antres in their might,
And low along the mountain ridges prowls,
Tossing their shaggy manes with lordly roar;
While, by the lash of lightning still uncowed,
They, raging and rebellious, long and loud,
Send many an angry and deep-throated growl
Rumbling along the caverns of the shore!

OCTOBER DAYS

'T IS sweet to roam within the tinted woods,
To tread the crimson carpet of its floor;
To hear the song, and let the silence pour,
Within the soul, entrancing interludes;
To wade through plummy ferns in listless moods,
And find the wild grape on the sycamore
In bloomy clusters; sweeter still to explore
Brown paths that tend to umber solitudes;
To see the scarlet quinquefolia crawl
O'er rock and tree, shedding her splendor round:
Dreamful to lie on banks of mosses browned
Listening the partridge pipe her liquid call;
To watch the goldfinch on the thistle-ball,
And hear, from hill-tops dim, the baying hound.

OPENING OF THE URNS

ALONG the reaches of the sunset sea

A troop of wingèd Spirits, mystic, fair,
Dim as the clouds and dreamy as the air,
Fluttered from out the twilight down to me:

"The golden vases which we brought to thee,
Time after time—before thy brow with care
Was seamed, and too, since thou hast known despair—
Hast thou worked out with them thy destiny?

In the past days that long have vanishèd,

What hast thou filled them with?" they softly said.

And I replied, not without shame and fears,

"Ah, Fate has filled them for me, through the years;

Lo! Open them, and look!"—and bowed my head. . . .

"Alas!" they sighed, "these urns are full of tears!"

A SERVANT UNABLE TO READ

WITH what a wonder born of mystery
She lifts the books, and reverently grave,
Moves 'mid these voiceless oracles;—how brave
She bears that doom which naught can mollify.
With longing eyes, perhaps with yearnings high,
She turns the fervid pages Shakespeare gave
To all, it seems, but her, who was a slave,
And never sees a book without a sigh.

Justice is God's! . . . Let not her heart rebel;
For Knowledge, like that flower which blooms at night,
May burst at last full-blossomed on her sight;
And they, who here forsooth, seem learned and wise,
May wait without the walls of Paradise,
The while she enters in—through serving well.

IN BONDAGE

Man is a Dream of Shadows.—PINDAR

If speechless through the shadowy vale we stray,
Reft of the afflatus of the sacred Nine;
If mute, in joy or suffering we resign
The dirge to others, and the roundelay,—
It will not, Friend, be ordered so alway,
For lips can be unlocked by touch divine;
E'en Memnon's image by the palm and pine
Sang in the desert at the dawn of day.
I feel the Spirit call me from afar;
And if in silence now these steps I wend,
This forced aphonia may not last for long;
Not here, indeed, but in some fairer star,
Fed from immortal rills, I hope to end
A life ineloquent, with affluent Song.

REMBRANDT VAN RHYN

Low, avaricious, mean, thou wert, they tell,—
Rembrandt! thy inner life they vilify.
Do thorns grow figs? Can truth spring from a lie?
The tenderness of Dante rather fell
Upon thy sorrowing soul, I know full well,
Else the sad angel looking through the eye
Of those old portraits thou couldst not descry,
Diviner of the supernatural!
Master of light, and color's crownèd king,
O Painter of the glory and the gloom,
Wizard of luminous dark—of glow—of bloom,
Poet profound, who wore the unseen wing,
Thrower of splendors round the meanest thing,
With thee, thy mantle fell within the tomb!

THE SHIP

I LAY at Delos of the Cyclades,
At evening, on a cape of golden land;
The blind Bard's book was open in my hand,
There where the Cyclops makes the Odyssey's
Calm pages tremble as Odysseus flees.
Then, stately, like a vision o'er the sand,
A phantom ship across the sunset strand
Rose out of dreams and clave the purple seas;
Straight on that city's bastions did she run—
Whose toppling turrets on their donjons hold
Bells that to mortal ears have never tolled—
Then drifted down the gateway of the sun
With fading pennon and with gonfalon,
And dropped her anchor in the pools of gold.

LA PRIMAVERA

At morning when the year is young and pale,
While yet the azure of the trembling skies
Is tender as the blue within the eyes
Of some sweet child; when in the quiet vale
About the feet, and in the far-off dale,
Close to the pool the earliest swallow flies;
When down within the dell the dim haze lies
And dreams; when from the thicket near, the quail
Pipes to his mate; and the brown sparrow sings
As if his soul were in his rapturous trills;—
Then the fair goddess with her gauzy wings
Paces the mead serenely, toward the hills.
It is the Spring come back again, who brings
Hope to the heart amid her daffodils.

AN ELEGY

IMMORTAL laurel of no growth terrene,
Gather, ye Muses, in Olympian air;
'T is for a shepherd, loved of Pan, to wear;
Behold him lying on the headland green
That juts above the sea in this demesne,
As still as sculptured marble, and as fair.
Ye will not wake him if ye crown him there;
Wreathe him the while he seems to sleep serene.
The syrinx now lies useless by his head . . .
Was that a sigh within the cypress near?
Oh, soft, ye Muses!—softly round him tread,
Bring all your late reluctant garlands here;
Relax your haughty mien; ye need not fear
To crown this Dorian now—for he is dead!

THE SPIRIT

THRIDDING the outer bulwarks in a light
Less lucent than mid-Heaven's refulgent glow,
I marked a Spirit coming, whom to know
Baffled recall. It seemed as if some blight
Of earthly memory had not left him quite—
As if vague recollection still did throw
A shadow o'er his bliss, who, moving slow
Through airy regions, neared my curious sight:
Compassion locked my lips, nor asked the cause
Of his paled happiness, and he withdrew
To leave me wondering what dim Spirit it was:
I felt, "Not blest is he as Angels are;"
Then I recalled, on feet and hands, the scar,—
Remembered Christ's last promise,—and I knew.

AFTER SEVERANCE

So all the vows of friendship which we swore
Are broke, and we estranged, at distance stand.
Across the chasm is stretched no beckoning hand
Of reconciliation. Now, no more
We hold sweet talk of books and poets' lore;
The current of a discord, cold, austere,
Widens between us, year by bitter year,
And each drifts further from the other's door.
Thus some wide summer river that of yore
Floated the lover to his mistress dear
Across the sunset waters, now with snows
Engorged, rough-packed with jagged ice-wastes drear,
Barriers the way, nor intercourse allows
From incommunicable shore to shore.

A TUSCAN PASTORAL

A PAINTING BY CLAUDE

THE russet levels of Italian leas
Reach far away to where the mountain clips
The quiet vale. Anear, the streamlet dips
Purling beside us. Vine-enwreathèd trees
Rise, till their tops might hail the midland seas;
And now a kid within their shadow skips
Near the recumbent goat that slowly nips
The thymy pasture as it lies at ease.
The brooklet falls in foam; a cooling breeze
Calls to the kine to quit the scorching noon
And plash in shallows where the leader sips;
The dreamy goatherd, stretching sun-browned knees,
Leans from the bank and listens to the tune
The sliding syrinx wakes along his lips.

FOR A STATUE

PARAPHRASE FROM THEOCRITUS

THOU Traveler, here beneath the cypress stay
And view the statue of this bard of old,—
Archilochus the Poet, virile, bold,
The maker of the strong iambic lay.
His fame hath blown from portals of the day
Clear to the far Hesperian gates of gold;
The themes he glorified were manifold,
And over mortals held he marvelous sway.
The Muses heard, and after loved him long,
For wondrous were his wingèd words of fire,
And Hellas, listening, gave the singer cheer;
Such genius had he in creating Song
That when he chanted to his stirring lyre
Apollo ceased,—those golden strains to hear!

THE SPIRIT OF POESY

Not the close friendship of the closest friends;
Not wealth descending on her golden wings;
Titles nor honor,—no ephemeral things,—
Can, for the lack of her, e'er make amends.
She will not stoop to sublunary ends,
Nor touch the baubles which the base world brings;
Her song unpurchasable, still she sings,
And all her soul upon the singing spends.
She treads her constellated paths alone,
Sandaled with starry aspirations bright,
Beyond the visions of this world—how far!
Sadly she sits upon her dazzling throne
In fading splendor, like a lingering star
That pales at sunrise in the wastes of light!

THE FIELDS OF QUIET

"SPIRIT, whose wings, unruffled, ever seem
Folded in calm across thy peaceful breast,
Who waitest near the Throne within the West,—
Where are the Quiet Fields of which we dream?
Lie they along that molten-golden stream
That flows at eve above yon mountain crest?
Are they the vales reclusive, named of Rest,
That through the opal gateways faintly gleam?"

And then a voice in faint seraphic strain
Came drifting downward on the twilight breath,
From realms unseen beyond the vesper sky:
"The Fields of Quiet, here ye seek in vain;
Within the Dark those ashen regions lie,
Deep in the kingdoms of the Monarch, Death!"

TRANSMUTATION

SOUTHWARD from India's spired citadel,
Where all the Orient wafts her odorous breeze
Along the reaches of Ceylonian seas
Beyond her beds of coral,—there doth dwell
A jewel-making mollusk. In its shell
When atoms enter, then, the pain to ease,
Slowly it coats with nacre each of these,
Producing pearls that scarce have parallel.

Ah, me! all sufferings and all ecstasies
Of grief which to the Singer still belong—
Heart-lacerations and the vortex-swirls
Of passion—are by him, through agonies
Of spirit, turned at length to lyric pearls—
Transmuted by the alchemy of song.

"NOW LIKE A RED LEAF"

IN youth how slowly passed the golden day!
As if upon the stillness of some brook
You threw a rose-leaf, and the rose-leaf took
Its own sweet time to loiter to the bay;
The lark sang always; life was endless play;
We lived on nectar from a poet's book;
Drifting along by many a sunny nook,
Little we cared—it would be ever May!
Now, like a red leaf on the autumnal stream
That cannot steer nor stop—that cannot sink—
Swiftly I glide. As in some fateful dream
There is no time to pause—no time to think;
The cataract roars—I see the white foam gleam
Within the gorge—it draws me to the brink!

HOMeward BOUND

As some stray carrier-pigeon onward hies
O'er alien spire and dim cathedral dome,
With weakening pinions that reluctant roam
Athwart the blank, inhospitable skies;
Famished and faint, with eager, yearning eyes,
Whirled by the wind above the mad sea-foam,
Till, at the last outworn, he gains his home,
Falls at his 'mistress' feet, content, and dies:
So unto thee, sweet Mother of all Song,
Weak and full weary with world-wanderings,
We wing the trackless deserts of our sky;
Truant to thee, O Poësy, too long,
We reach thy feet at last with bleeding wings,
And fain would nestle near thy heart to die!

THOUGH MAY HAS COME

WHEN o'er the mead the jonquil-trumpet blows,
Spring sounds once more her soft exultant strain;
Between the golden showers of the rain
I hear her laughter where the brooklet flows.
Beside her path the earliest crocus grows,
And daffodils go dancing in her train;
Along green slopes within the country lane
She bends to greet the budding of the rose.
Ah yes, long-wished-for May at last I see,
With all her blossoms and with all her blue,
And gladly from December do I part;
And yet, Dear Love, it is not May with me,—
For till the violet brings a sight of you
Still is it Winter in my lonely heart!

FROM THE FOOT OF OLYMPUS

STILL doth Alphèus murmur as he flows
By myrtled banks, where floats the rich perfume
Of orange-blossoms clustered in the gloom
Of hidden glens. Lonely the traveler goes
Girt with cloud-shadows. By the mountain close
Flocks nip the sward the Judas-trees illumine
With bending branches of purple bloom;
And scarlet in the gullies flames the rose.
No sound of Satyr nor Bacchantè here,
Pandean pipe nor purl of reedy oat,
Nor, as of old, the clanging cymbals' cheer,
While the mute herdsman, on the steep, remote,
Lagging behind the slowly-browsing goat,
Seems but a shadow on the upland drear.

"LOVE AND LIFE"

A PAINTING BY G. F. WATTS, R.A.

SUFFERING and weak, what ill has come to thee

O piteous Life? Up what bloom-barren slope

Cam'st thou, so desolately fair, to grope

Thy perilous way in unvoiced agony?

Behold, Love pleads! Oh, listen to his plea!

Be lifted where thy spirit doth aspire,

For thou hast reached the rose of thy desire—

Love leading Life from Infelicity.

O innocent One, masking thy grievous wound

In touching silence, who shall dare to tell

The yearning pain—the bitterness profound

Of tremulous hope that looks through longing eyes

Made sadder by that smile ineffable,

And pathos of thine inarticulate cries?

UPON THE HEARTH

A TREE will prove a blessing all life long;
From birth to death it brings us naught but good;
The shade will make a pleasant solitude
For one who lies and dreams the grass among;
What golden globes upon the limbs are hung
In summer! and when dead, the burning wood
Will foster sweetness in the poet's mood,
Hum on his hearth, and help his sylvan song.
Its death is like the day's, for still it throws
A lingering light roseate around our rooms,
As slow the fire its last of life consumes;
Then sinks to embers like the sunset snows,
And dying, even in its ashes, glows
With bright remembrance of the spring-time blooms.

THE EVENING COMES

THE evening comes: the boatman lifts the net,
Poles his canoe and leaves it on the shore;
So low the stream he does not use the oar;
The umber rocks rise like a parapet
Up through the purple and the violet,
And the faint-heard and never-ending roar
Of moving waters lessens more and more,
While each vague object looms a silhouette.
The light is going; but low overhead
Poises the glory of the evening star;
The fisher, silent on the rocky bar,
Drops a still line in pools of fading red;
And in the sky, where all the day lies dead,
Slowly the golden crescent sinks afar.

THE QUEEN OF THE TIDES

SHE moves through heaven as the home of light,
Seeming a world beyond our own more blessed;
And when her silver shallop seeks the West,
Fain would we follow to her regions bright.
But she hath yawns of Darkness, black as night;
Riverless canyons; sulphurous gulphs unguessed;
And o'er her monstrous crater's lava crest
Never a cloud hath poised its fleecy white.
No flower is there; no grave,—no gracious sod;
No blessed rain within those vales of stone;
She seems some incompleated thought of God;
And on that pallid orb as on a throne—
Where no created thing perchance hath trod—
Eternal Silence sits and broods alone.

TO AN OLD LABORER

ON looking from the window to the street
Each eve is seen an old man trudging by,
Infirm and poor, with body bent awry,
And head bowed forward toward his tired feet.
Black with the dust, and sweltering with the heat—
Shoveling the coals each day incessantly—
He never looks from pavement to the sky,
Nor any of the passers does he greet.
Thus every eve through sunshine or through sleet,
He may be seen, as slow he shuffles nigh:
Brave heart! let me salute you, as is meet;
We both are of the toilers,—you and I,—
You've fought for seventy years against defeat,
Now victory's near—for some day you will die!

THE YOUNG EMBALMER

ANCIENT EGYPT

THE crypt was still, vine-shaded from the heat;
On the black marble lay the Maiden, dead,
Naked and brown, a lotus at her head,
The pale embalmer trembling at her feet.
He washed her heart in palm-wine, as was meet,
And in the empty body deftly spread
Arabian nards, that heavy fragrance shed,
With myrrhy spices and the mystic wheat.
Sombre, at hand, stood the Canopian jars;
Touching her brow and holding back his tears,
He nerved his soul, and took her beauteous eyes
Each from its hollow—dull lack-lustre stars
Once bright with love—and 'mid low stifled sighs,
Placed in their sockets the obsidian spheres.

MARGIN OF SWATARA

I

How silvery through the meadows parched and sere,
The limpid brook ran purling on its way!
On either side we walked,—the runnel clear
Kept our hands parted on that heavenly day.
You warbled, as we strolled, a careless lay
As blithesome as the bird, that rising near,
Trilled his rapt lyric in the blue of May,—
'T was Love that made him sweetly carol, Dear!
Ah, me! once more across the years I seem—
Once more with you to tread the summer air,
Watching the sunlight kiss your lustrous hair;
O Time! give back again that golden dream—
My Sweetheart, lost, long lost, who with me there
Rambled for lilies by the Indian stream!

WINGS OF THE MORNING

II

YEA, I will build a tower on every crest
Where we two stood together in love's pride,
So that the River, flowing grandly wide,
May still remember where your feet have pressed!
These peaks shall not forget you, but attest
Your beauty on the mountains, and the tide—
Where the bent currents near the boulders glide—
Murmur of you when crimsoned by the West.
The wild swans, flying south, shall swerve more low
And by these landmarks reach the reedy sea;
The eagle near shall poise in azure air;
Men now unborn, and maidens yet to be,
Seeing your memory coronated so,
Shall feel your loveliness—and my despair!

THE LILY OF DAWN

III

WHERE are you now—for years have o'er us flown—
Since last I touched the flower of your hand?
To what luxurious creature have you grown?
Who bow before you in that foreign land?
Steeped in the languor of an orient strand,
Lulled by the odor of spice-laden breeze,
The dusky turbans move at your command
By palmy reaches of Ceylonian seas:
But when the crimson-arrowed evening falls
On minaret and many a gilded dome
Touching with splendor the white palace walls,
O pine you not for those enraptured days,
Yearning to walk again the blissful ways
Made dear by Love before you left your home?

“THESE WASTE THE SPIRIT”

LIKE to a pebble lying on the shore,
So is our life that for a space abides;
The dominant sea* o'errules us and o'errides,
Wearing each day a little from our store.
We rest resigned; we listen to the roar,
And bear the slow abrasion of the tides;
While still with its irrevocable strides
Tramples the sea upon us evermore.
The unending friction of the night and day;
And e'en the slow corrosion of our glee;
The thunderous breakers capped with agony,—
These waste the spirit, as they sap the clay,
Until at last we're slowly worn away,
Gulfed in that dark, unfathomable sea.

THE END OF EREBUS

As on the cliff's Cimmerian ridge I bent,
Precipitously steep, below the scaur,
Down—down the abysm's perpendicular,
I listened for the rock my feet had sent
Thundering, to strike some bottom; but it went
Noiseless into the nadir,—as a star
Darkened by God in anger, from afar
Drops black into the gulphs ignipotent.
A voice swept past. The Pit below me brake
Into one crimsoned cauldron, and the glooms,
And all the heated peaks, began to take
The dye of dread vermilion; for the wombs
Of hell belched upward, and I saw the quake
And frantic winnowings of a billion plumes.

TO A YOUNG MAID

THOU bidd'st me speak of Love, and thou a girl,
A dove-like maiden, innocently sweet,
Whose gentle, duteous, and well-mothered feet
Know not the primrose path, nor the red whirl
Of passion's vortex. Thou art still a pearl
Ungathered and unworn. It were not meet
That I should call the dark winds of deceit
To waft my ship of words, so speech must furl
Her sail, and anchor here. Some tongue, not mine,
Shall tell thee later, sweet one! what love is;
Some lips, alas, not these, teach thee the bliss.
Long may that vestal nimbus which is thine,
Circle thee round—unsullied by Love's kiss—
And angel Innocence, more than half divine!

THE FIRST HOAR-FROST

TO A POET

THE meads to-day are white with rime,—no mirth
Comes from the leafless thicket on the hill
Where birds once choired; and along the rill,
Ice-bound, no rippling music, but a dearth
Of cheer on this the day of Winter's birth;
Yet while the frosts the dormant wheat-fields fill,
We know that warmly beats, beneath the chill,
The unextinguishable pulse of Earth.

And though your life's December spreads its gray,
Lightly, in this first frost, within your hair,
Your spirit soars a falcon, now, in sooth,
More eager for the zenith, and her prey.
Why count the years while in our breast we bear
The bard's unalterable heart of Youth!

THE CLOSE OF DAY

THE sun is gently sinking down the sky,
And all the air is growing hushed and still;
A tinge of rose has touched the purple hill
Where slow the silver river murmurs by.
The busy day has run the head-race dry;
The wheel rests, unrevolving, by the mill,
Where, like an amber thread, the dwindled rill
Slips past the ripening slopes of yellow rye.
As yet the fish is sun-tipped on the vane,
Though cottage lamps are lit beneath the boughs;
At rest within the furrow, stand the plows,
And homeward o'er the hill-top goes the wain;
While in a dusty glory all the cows
Come winding, slowly, up the golden lane.

“AH, TELL ME NOT”

AH, tell me not that passionate words of mine
Shall vanish from the world and fade away;
That these strong dreams which haunt me night and day,
Wrought into song, shall with my sun decline!
Will not some poet, pacing by the brine,
Repeat these words to keep them from decay?
Or but the tone of one elusive lay
That I have sung, deep in his heart enshrine?
Or some fond lover, who is yet unborn,
Wandering about the reaches of the sea,
Sick of the world and filled with softened scorn,—
Will he not read one line and think of me
And softly sigh, “What hidden grief had he—
This Poet dead—whose soul was so forlorn?”

TO BYRON

HE with a strenuous voice of vibrant tone,
Æolian in its sweep and majesty,
Untrammelled as the heavens, and as free,
In passionate throbbings from his bosom's throne
Flung Song from the Ægean's classic zone
Sublime in its impetuosity,—
Like to the voice of the eternal sea
Filled with a wild unfathomable moan.
O Dust! far from the Minster by the Thames,
Reft of the oriel and the organ roll,
Unnicked among thy land's illustrious names,
Where is he, living, who can touch thy goal?
Whose words, as thine, within the file of Fame's
Resplendent troop, so melt, so move the soul!

THE JOURNEY

My path lay through a valley white as lime
In sunlight. The long grasses looked as though
Covered with frost or thinnest coat of snow.
The trees were alabaster—yet the time
Was Summer—up their trunks did crawl and climb
Ivy, like marble and bleached mistletoe;
And while I mused, the semblance of a crow
Flew near, and whispered something to a Mime
Who beckoned me to follow up the glen:
I followed through interminable glooms
Of white, up to an eminence of tombs
As thick as snow-flakes on the hills, and then—
A wind arose, and dust of buried men
Blew round such blackness as no light illumes.

EURYDICE

THE eve was quiet, with no airs to fan
The silent rushes round the milk-white knees
Of the lone Naiad; nor the faintest breeze
To stir still pools. There on the marge began
The print of sandals, faint, that onward ran—
Those love-lorn foot-marks were Eurydice's.
She listened, as within the Cyclades
One listens to the sea cerulean.
Pale clouds lay on the stream and changed to red;
A fear came to her, and her quick pulse beat;
The heart of silence ached so that it bled;
When through the laurel—hot, pursuing, fleet—
Rushed Aristæus, and she turned and fled,
Nor heard the hissing adder at her feet.

THE SILENCE AFTER ORPHEUS' DEATH

It was the sweetest silence ever fell
Upon the ear of earth. Not the profound
Dark deeps of air which tremble and resound
When seraphim have ceased; nor far-off swell
Of seas that break on shores of asphodel,
And leave a stillness panting all around
With the remembered music of the sound;
Not when some faint and spiritual bell
Tolled in the memory, ceases; not the star
That throbs itself to darkness in the sky,
Leaving a void softer than voices are,—
Not these were sweet as silence with her sigh
Around the head of Orpheus, floating far,
When Bacchic revelers stopped his melody.

THE LAST SONG OF ORPHEUS

THAT silence ceased; and on the golden shore,
The Thracian women, sanguine-handed, heard
Song from the River sweeter than the bird
That takes the night with rapture, or of yore,
Orpheus himself had sung. And more and more
It grew, and gathered to one lucent word,
So piteous-sweet, no pen could e'er record
Such honeyed sound as then began to soar.
The satyr pricked his goat-ears, wonderingly,
And dropped, atween his hoofs, his pipe of oat.
Bird, fish, and grove, moved to the melody
For the last time. On Hebrus, far afloat,
The soul of Orpheus, in one dulcet note
Passed, as his dead lips sang, Eu-ryd-i-ce!
Till listening mermaids in the Ægean sea
Drew down the head, and sang with silver throat,
On rocks, and in sea-caves, the self-same note,—
Eu-ryd-i-ce! Eu-ryd-i-ce!

THESEUS AND ARIADNE

AT NAXOS

Thes. NAY, I have loved thee!

Ari. Thou *hast* loved, didst say?

Thes. I loved thee well at Crete.

Ari. Lov'st me no more?

Thes. Ah! who can hold the wave upon the shore?

Ari. Thou, if thou wouldst; and oh, is that the way
Thou speak'st to me, who gave thee, on that day
My flower of life?

Thes. There waits my sail and oar!

Ari. Did I not save thee from the Minotaur,—
And wilt thou leave me?

Thes. Who can make love stay?

Wax is my heart, and takes full easily
The last print on 't. Past love is past recall.
Adieu! . . . Love has the helm—he guides—not we.

Ari. Belovèd Traitor! may thy black sail pall
Deep in the brine, thee, and thy maidens all! . .
Ye gods! he leaves me and my babe to be!

IF THOU WOULDST COME

THAT day He stilled the tempest, and on land
Drave out the spirits. He was filled with power
And pity. Jairus said, "O Lord, my flower—
My rose—my daughter dies; do Thou demand
She live, and it shall be." One there at hand
Spake out, "She is already dead." . . . That hour
From Galilee, by many a palm and tower,
He came,—and she arose at His command.

Were I to be within earth's darksome deeps
A thousand years, commingled with the clay,
I should not feel to-night as one who weeps,
If I could know, dear Lord, in that far day
Thou'dst come, and to the slumbering ashes say,
"Awake! arise! He is not dead, but sleeps."

TO THE MILKWEED

NONE call thee flower! . . . I will not so malign
The satin softness of thy plumèd seed,
Nor so profane thee as to call thee weed,
Thou tuft of ermine down, fit to entwine
About a queen; or fitter still, to line
The nest of birds of strange exotic breed.
The orient cunning and the somnolent speed
Of looms of Ind weave not a silk so fine.
Ah, could but he who in these pages sings,
On such adventurous and aerial wings
Far over lands and undiscovered seas
Waft the dark seeds of his imaginings,
That, flowering, some might say, Lo! look on these
Wild Weeds of Song—not all ungracious things!

THE FIELDS OF DAWN

Rambles of a Youth and Maid as Comrades

THE FIELDS OF DAWN

THE FOREST PATH

I

AMONG the maple-buds we heard the tones
Of April's earliest bees, although the days
Seemed ruled by Mars. The veil of gathering haze
Spread round the silent hills in bluest zones.
Deep in the pines the breezes stirred the cones,
As on we strolled within the wooded ways,
There where the brook, transilient, softly plays
With muffled plectrum on her harp of stones;
Onward we pushed amid the yielding green
And light rebounding of the cedar boughs,
Until we heard—the forest lanes along,
Above the lingering drift of latest snows—
The Thrush outpour, from covert still unseen,
His rare ebulliency of liquid song!

RELUCTANT SPRING

II

VANISHED again, all heralds of the Spring!

The rath song-sparrow, yesternoon that shook

The elder with his lay, these dells forsook

Leaving no echo of his voice or wing,

And now in warmer glens is carolling.

Above the muffled bubble of the brook

We hear a bird-like sound, but when we look,

'Tis but the withered beech-leaves' twittering.

Silence is in the dale—a waiting hush—

As if the very hill-side listens too

That it may hear the birds their song renew;

While in the thicket's briery underbrush,

Where last year sang the unrivaled hermit-thrush,

The Raspberry bends her bows of palest blue.

THE FEATHERED CHOIR

III

As chilling airs grew balmy once again,
Within the forest from a leafless spray
Some timorous songster tried his earliest lay,
For Spring was coyly coming up the glen.
The cardinal flashed by within our ken—
A wingèd rose where all the groves were gray;
And like a flash of April came the jay,
While captious in the tangle chafed the wren.
But the brown-sparrow on the alder-tree,
Outrivaling better warblers of the wood,
Forced our applause by bursts of ecstasy;
As at Olympia once, dwarf Zenocles,
Amid the plaudits of the multitude,
Won the wreathed olive from Euripides.

APRIL FROM THE LAWN

IV

In the wild sky the lakes of shifting blue
Were, by wind-harried clouds, revealed or blurred;
Along the brook, in leafy mould interred,
We saw the snowdrop shyly peeping through.
The noisy grackles, in their raven hue,
Turned down the rudders of their tails, and whirred
Up to the walnut as a single bird,
Rasping their wheezy note as on they flew.
The shadow from the gnomon of the pine
Fell on the dial of the lawn, and told
In intervals of sun, the passing hours;
The sap was waking in the eglantine;
Beneath the ground the jonquil forged her gold,
And hope was springing in the heart of flowers.

SUNSET FROM THE SUMMIT

V

THE rhythmic music of our horses' feet
Woke the long bridge and echoed o'er the plains;
Within the forest oft their flowing manes
Were brushed by branches where the wildings meet;
The grape-vine's blossom in the air was sweet,
As on our saddlers' necks we dropped the reins,
And let them pick their way through rocky lanes
Along the margin of the dense retreat.
We reached the hill-top, and the late glow there
Lingered, reluctant still to leave your cheek,
Then faded slowly from the river's breast;
While on the summit, gazing from the peak,
We watched Hyperion drive his flaming pair
Down the gold highways of the crimsoned West.

BY VINE-CLAD EAVES

VI

WE stooped a moment 'mid the golden hosts
Of buttercups to gather one bouquet;
Then wandered where the dandelion ghosts
Strewed all the greensward with a phantom gray.
The bursting white-oak leaf, that looks in May
A silver bloom, frosted the shooting tips;
And all the bellefleur buds were out that day
As ruby-rosy as your own dear lips!
Along the windings of the avenue
The guelder-rose displayed her spheres of white,
And eaves were purpled with wistaria flowers;
While the faint aura, for the sake of you,
Toying among the clustered blossoms bright,
With rarest fragrance filled the balmy hours.

"ALONG THE REEDY SHORE"

VII

To Vallombrosan valleys let them go;
To steep Sorrento, or where ilex-trees
Cast their gray shadows o'er Sicilian seas;
Dream at La Conca D'Oro; catch the glow
Of sunset on the Ischian cliffs, and know
The blue Ionian inlets where the breeze,
Leaving some snow-white temple's Phidian frieze,
Wafts their light shallop languorously slow.
Let us lie here along the reedy shore
Where Susquehanna spreads her liquid miles,
To watch the circles from the dripping oar;
To see the halcyon dip, the eagle soar;
'To drift at dusk around these Indian isles,
Or dream at noon beneath the sycamore.

AFLOAT AT SUNSET

VIII

OH, the wide River and her water-ways
Whose currents draw us through their rocky gates,
Winding between a thousand grassy aits
To glorious greeneries in unlooked-for bays!
The clustered islands swim in amber haze;
And the rich sun, reluctant, slow awaits
His destined setting, while he still creates
Upon the golden tide one dazzling blaze.
Silence around, save where the waters blue,
Among the sedgy inlets in a dream,
Murmur, alluringly, their liquid note;
There, leaning listless in our long canoe,
With paddle trailing idly in the stream,
We, mirrored on the rippling surface, float.

ON THE RIVER HEADLAND

IX

WE loitered on the headland's rocky knoll
Above the shining River, silver-bright;
And far below we saw the rapids roll
Their rushing waters into boiling white.
The morning sun, down-gleaming in his might,
Showed the lone fisher with his slender pole—
Where the dazed vision lost at last control—
Push his canoe across the blinding light.
We watched the sea-hawk mounting with his prey,
The brigand eagle meet him in the air,
And, swooping under, catch the falling fish;
'T was sweet with you to linger idly there,
Or, gently piloted by your dear wish,
To climb adown the crag-path's perilous way.

FROM THE SHADOWY PORCH

x

UPON the porch vine-shadows touched our feet;
Across the rich fields of the level plain
A breeze, precursor of the summer rain,
Chased the gold billows o'er the sea of wheat.
The dazzling air, a-tremble with the heat,
Grew calm and blue in all the dells again;
And to the umbrage of the trees the swain
Drove the white flock within the cool retreat.
The fox-grape clambering o'er the oaken limb,
Swayed to and fro in many a green festoon,
And on the rolling lawn in sun-flecked urns
The fitful zephyr swayed each plume of ferns,
While rows of hollyhocks, like maidens slim,
Bowed to each other in the sun of June.

FOOTFALLS OF THE RAIN

XI

BELOVED Fields! from out your pure domains
Floats music softer than from viol strings;
Better the warbling of your feathered things
Than all the rolling organ's deep refrains;
What prima donna trills such liquid strains
As yon brown meadow-lark, that floating sings
Above her nest on slow-descending wings,
With plaintive sweetness that the soul enchains?
Not hers alone, but myriad notes there are
Too sweet for telling, where all sounds are sweet:
The delicate footfalls of the showery rains;
The breezes rustling o'er the sea-green wheat;
The murmurous voices, faintly heard and far,
Of children gathering cherries in the lanes.

THE SUMMER MOON

XII

THE long day over, 'mid the islets fair,
Homeward we headed then our slender boat
Across the crimson waters, slow to float
By many a liliated inlet lying there.
The distant rapids murmured through the air,
And as our oars the placid river smote,
The scarlet circles, widening on remote,
Carried away the very wraith of care.
The sunset darkened; from the hill the moon
Arose full-faced; and breezes rustling through
The reedy harps waked all their silent strings;
Then o'er the surface, smooth as some lagoon,
We drifted in the gloaming dim and blue,
As Evening spread abroad her shadowy wings.

SUMMER SOUNDS

XIII

WITHIN the clover-fields abloom we hear
The mower whet his scythe; and far away,
O'er lowlands fragrant with the new-mown hay,
The rattle of the reaper, sharp and clear.
Across the reedy stretches of the mere
The grazing horses send their greeting neigh;
While, 'mid the silence of the golden day,
The locust's harsh staccato stabs the ear.
Dim shimmering in the heat the violet hills
Call to us vaguely from a realm of dreams;
And from the meadow's blue, meandering streams
Come muffled murmurs of the distant mills;
While from the upland, as his barns he fills,
We hear the farmer calling to his teams.

IN GRATEFUL SHADE

XIV

THE leafy fence-rows made a green retreat,
Where cattle stood within the shade to doze;
The elder there upreared her bloom of snows,
And many a mavis made the dingle sweet.
Far o'er the corn fields, in the dazzling heat,
The silent women labored in the rows;
And where the hedge its sheltering shadow throws,
We heard at intervals the lambkins bleat.
We watched the harrows make their furrow wide;
The thievish grackles follow, round by round;
The running robins halting, as they eyed
With crafty caution all the mellow ground;
While, three abreast, in seeming conscious pride,
The stately horses passed without a sound.

AN AUGUST SHOWER

xv

THE gilded Indian of the village vane
Swirls to the east; and slow the tall tree-tops
Wave with the fitful wind that stirs, and stops,
And stirs anew; while gently falls again
The gracious benefaction of the rain.
The pendent garlands of the garden hops
Sway with the breeze; and the blown peach-tree drops
Her globes of crimson in the grassy lane.
The thunder, from its cavernous retreat,
Rolls hither o'er the fields and darkening fells;
The brooklet in the meadow slowly swells;
The shower has come, and gone. Past is the heat;
Now range the herds across the clover dells,
And flocks are nibbling in the stubbled wheat.

SULTRY AUGUST

XVI

THE very weeds were wilted, leaf and blade ;
The Durhams stood and panted in the stream ;
Deep in the pool we saw them slowly wade,
Mottled with gold of many a sunny gleam.
The tired plowman, in the heat extreme,
Stopped by the willows where no leaflet swayed,
And as he brought the water to his team
They stretched their sweating necks and softly neighed.
Beyond the dale, above the sultry steeps,
In fields of bluer and intenser light,
Poised the lone buzzard, rising in repose,
Where soaring upward through the zenith deeps,
In toppling mounds of unimagined white,
The rolling cloud unfolded as a rose !

"SILENT THE HERON STOOD"

XVII

IN August noons, along the River green,
Faint lay the mountains in the sultry haze;
The sky was colorless; a hot white blaze
Made the dim islands dimmer in its sheen.
The further hills were hardly to be seen
Until some cloud-thrown shadow gloomed the grays
Of wooded ridges, shutting out the day's
Insufferable glare with softened screen.
Listless we looked across the lifted oars
To where the silver fish, with sudden spring
Sent the small circle widening, ring on ring;
While in the pebbly shoals that lined the shores
Under the umbrage of the sycamores,
Silent the heron stood and preened his wing.

SEPTEMBER DAYS

XVIII

WITHIN the wood September sunlight lay
Dappling the golden soil; there was no sound
Save of the acorn dropping to the ground,
Or now and then, the bugle of the jay.
At times, a squirrel from the bending spray,
Leapt to the chestnut limb with venturous bound;
Or on some wooded crest, the lonely hound
Woke the reverberations far away.
The corn was ranked in many a tasseled tent,
And bluest haze slept on the peaceful hills
Where once the Sagamores had fought and slain.
Aneâr, the plodding farmer slowly bent
Across the umber stretches, while the drills
Scattered the blessings of the future grain.

THE SCARLET VINES

XIX

'T WAS our delight when Autumn days were here,
To stand in tawny ferns and see the sun
Break through the drifting clouds of dove-like dun,
And, for a moment shining summer-clear,
Turn to resplendent gold the hickory sere.
Then where the quinquefolia had o'errun
The oak's extremest branches, and begun
To fall in pendants, crimson tier on tier,
We watched the brilliant streamers as they swayed
Touched with the glorious light, and all aglow,
Like scarlet banners in some cavalcade
Of mediæval tourney long ago,
Where bugles blared, and plumèd palfreys neighed,
And lances fell on armor, blow on blow!

HAZY WOODLANDS

XX

THE nearest woodlands wore a misty veil;
From phantom trees we saw the last leaf float;
The hills, though near us, seemed to lie remote,
Wrapped in a balmy vapor, golden-pale.
From somewhere hidden in the dreamy dale—
Latona's sorrow yet within her note—
Reft of her comrades, o'er the stubbled oat
We heard the calling of the lonely quail.
In the bare corn field stalked the silent crow;
Too faint the breeze to make the grasses sigh,
And not one carol came from out the sky;
But o'er the golden gravelly levels low,
The brook, loquacious, still went lirting by
As liquidly as Lara, long ago.

LEGEND OF INDIAN SUMMER

MICABO

XXI

THERE is a legend the Algonquins tell
Of the weird power of the Great White One;
The God of Light he is, and of the Sun,
And in their strange lore hath no parallel.
He, in the Summer, from his citadel,
Comes to his cloudy gates of golden dun,
And throws them open when the day's begun,
And shuts them in the evening. But a spell
Saps his puissance when the Autumn haze
Spreads its dim-shimmering silver on the rills;
Then to the mountain-tops he slowly wends,
And, idly drowsing on the dreamy hills,
Puffs at his pipe, and as the smoke descends,—
Behold our mellow Indian Summer days!

IN GRASSES SERE

XXII

Low tangles of long grasses, sere and pale;
The flowerless stalks of most pathetic weeds
Holding their heads up with a few scant seeds—
Their hope of next year's life; the sougning wail
Of scentless winds that scour the bitter vale
And find no fragrance now from all the meads;—
The sorrow of the time that far exceeds
The deepest pathos of the saddest tale!
We met these sombre changes with a sigh,
Feeling the breath of Winter drawing near,
And wished at heart the days of Spring were here,
For now we saw but boundless wastes of gray
Where once appeared the glowing sapphire sky
With her unfathomable deeps of May.

NOVEMBER GRAY

XXIII

BUT though November on the fading hill
Trode, in her sombre robes, with muffled feet,
Yet to our ears came music, silver-sweet,
From tinkling lyres in the hidden rill.
As days were coming with their bitter chill,
We dearer prized the pale sun's feeble heat;
As flowers were gone, eager we were to greet
The green which edged the mossed wheel by the mill.
The sycamores that by the old race grew,
Were lifting silently their marble arms
In the deep arches of immurmurous noon.
Our only birds were pigeons from the farms;
While in the rain-filled ruts the pools of blue
Held the frayed circle of the gray-faced moon.

THE WILD NORTH BLOWS

XXIV

BLUSTERING the day, but as the rain was done,
We sought the slopes whereon the kalmia grew;
Far on the River—loved of me and you—
The whitecaps glistened in the streaks of sun.
The sky with hurrying clouds was overrun,
That, torn in shreds, across the heavens blew,
As o'er the wooded ridges wildly flew
The eagle-flighted North-Wind, Aquilon.
But down below, within the level vale,
Where the high fell the lower valley shields,
The plowman went his still recurrent round;
Careless of winds he plodded in the dale;
His shining share up-turned the frosty ground
Against the future seeding of the fields.

THE WINTER STORM

XXV

THE wind was rising to a wintry gale;
We left the valley, lying white below,
And from the untrod ridges deep with snow
Turned and looked down upon the shrouded vale.
The spirits of the North began to wail
Around the cliff, as toiling upward slow,
We reached the crest and saw the sunset-glow
Flare on the crags around us, crimson-pale.
Then all the twilight phantoms of the sky
Changed into ever-shifting dragon-form,
And close above the mountain, crouching, lay;
Weird voices in the pines began to sigh,
And writhing branches lashed the shuddering gray,
As through the gathering darkness broke the storm.

BUILD THOU THY TEMPLES

REWARD lies in the work, not in the eye
Nor voice of critic. Whether on the mart,
Or on the Heliconian hills apart,
Toil at thy temples builded in the sky.
Dreams are in sooth the only verity.
The world with scorn may lacerate thy heart—
Insult with praise too late. Delve at thine Art:
Beauty shall never unremembered die.

The sculptor, unillustrious and alone,
Pent in the still reclusion of his room,
Carves, through the vexed vicissitude of years,
Some marvel in Carrara; but the stone
Men heed not till it stand above his tomb—
The cold commemoration of his tears.

BURKE

1730-1797

His was that golden opulence of phrase—
That sumptuous and impassioned diction splendid,
Upon whose fiery pauses hung suspended
Assembled multitudes in mute amaze.
That great heart still for Freedom was ablaze.
The battery of his eloquence defended
Man and his rights: too soon that power ended,—
He died while in the lustre of his days.

So some great battle-ship magnificent,
Whose cannon, thundering o'er the listening world,
Their still triumphant detonations hurled
In pealing tones of conquest eloquent,
Sinks, suddenly—her royal flags unfurled—
Invincible, with all her armament.

UP WITH THE DRAWBRIDGE

UNRESTRICTED IMMIGRATION

THIS glorious Castle, whose broad base was laid
With our forefathers' blood, whose turrets glow
Yet from our war, is threatened with worse woe,
While home-foes mine the walls in ambushade.
The idle—worthless—pauper—renegade,
Swarm on the moat. Shall Europe—Python foe—
Slough her skin here? Or Asia? Tell her, No!
This Tower, by sires, for us alone was made!
See! from the steerage, how they scale the wall!
Shall our fair Castle sink into such hands?
Awake, ye Sentries! 't is a Nation's call.
We welcome all the good of all the lands,
But bring not here the evil, outcast bands,—
Quick—to the gate! Let the portcullis fall!

THE THRUSH

OFt have I heard at even-tide the thrush
 Embowered in the topmost branches fair,
 Warbling his love-lay in the golden air,
 As on his beating breast the sunset flush
Lay like a glory, and the twilight hush
 Deepened between the sobs of song that there
 Filled the dark groves with eloquent despair;
 While all the listening laurel underbrush
Trembled and thrilled its myriad leaves among,
 Till the white Dryad, as she silent stood,
 Leaned forward her sweet neck a-listening long,—
Held captive in the darkening solitude,
 Chained by this necromancer of the wood,
 Enraptured by the ecstasies of song!

AN INVITATION

My box-wood, *arbor-vitæ*, and the pine
We planted in our youth, are standing green
About the porch, though Boreal winds blow keen:
Friend of past days, come worship at the shrine
We love; sit at that table where no wine
They need who quaff immortal Hippocrene,
And from the hand of Poësy, serene,
Sup on Olympian viands all divine!
Oh, leave that buzzing hive, the city mart!
Come, while my gnarl'd oaks hold their wealth of snows,
Come to a country home, let mind and heart—
Mellowed by midnight, while the back-log glows—
Touch on the themes most dear—the Muse and Art—
Till in the east unfolds the auran rose.

EDWIN BOOTH AS HAMLET

O PRINCELY Shade, crowned with immortal bays
In amaranthine fields beyond our ken,
Look down with patience on the lesser men
That thou hast left to follow in thy ways!
The fine rendition of Shakespearian plays
Passed out with thee, nor has it come again.
Thy Muse, alas! is not the denizen
Of Thespian boards in these material days.
The stage thou trodd'st is made spectacular.
Where is the fire—the pathos—loved in thee?
The grace inimitable that was thine?
Thy wondrous eye was as a glorious star;
And when thy voice rolled out the sounding line,
We seemed to hear the surges of the sea!

REVERBERATE TONES

AH! who would listen ever to one choir?

The lark's clear note, the dove's melodious moan,
The sweetest music unto mortal known,
With frequent iteration soon must tire.

Whoso shall lay his hand upon the lyre

For many a rapturous day, as I have done,
Needs must reverberate some earlier tone,
And often strike, alas, the self-same wire!

So if with jarring note his harp resounds,

Blame not the struggling Lyrist nor the Muse;
How can the rugged Saxon which we use,

Whose roughness cleaves these lines with ragged wounds,
Charm as an organ-roll of Umbrian sounds
That float from Vallombrosa or Vauclose?

YOUTH IN LONDON

1872

Alieni temporis flores

REMEMBER you the day we were to meet,
When I in London was a loiterer,
And you, all muffled in a wealth of fur,
Came tripping with your Cinderella feet
Through the cold drizzle that was almost sleet,
Bringing a sense of warmth and lavender?
And then, 'neath one umbrella, how we were
Drenched, but enraptured, wading down the street?
Love laughed at all,—the miles of mud and slush,—
The lurking fear that parting would be pain . . .
Where are you now,—sprite of the mist and rain!—
Your lips, your eyes, your dimples and your blush,
Your voice—the mellow gurgle of a thrush—
Your voice—that I shall never hear again?

FIDELIA

How shall we speak and yet not all dispraise
Her loveliness!—that shy and unobtrusive
Beatitude of hers,—the sweet effusive
Goodness, irradiating all her days!
Heaven seemed nearer when we met her gaze;
The look revealed, yet kept her soul reclusive:
Oh, how can words e'er tell of that elusive,
Immaculate charm that graced her innocent ways!
For all our faults her eyes beamed but indulgence:
We worshipped her, but ah, she worshipped duty;
Something within her still seemed undiscovered;
A kind of saintliness around her hovered
That aureoled her with a strange effulgence
Abashing those who only loved her beauty.

THE SONNET'S MUSIC

STILL hearken for the Sonnet's hidden chime
As on the shore we list the sea-voiced shells;
The veiled music of the sonnet-swells
Should, in our song's cathedral nave sublime,
Roll down those rich reverberating halls
In soft antiphonies of recurrent rhyme.
Such tones were his who yet the ear enthralls—
Sonorous Singer of the Italian prime.
So Echo to Narcissus calls and calls
Among the grottoes of Arcadian fells;
At evening so, o'er cloud-built castle walls,
Faint—from far towers of airy citadels
Through deeps of twilight—rises, floats and falls
The sweet re-echo of ethereal bells.

THE ULTIMATE DAY

For a Wind Passeth Over It, and It is Gone

MOUNTAINS shall wear away, from base to sky
Shall crumble, and by Rivers carried on,
Glut, through the æons, the unfathomed yawn
Of deepest seas. The Sea itself shall dry,—
Shriveled, the illimitable land shall lie
A desolate and sterile waste, whereon
No hand may pluck the rose; the paling sun
Shall rise and set, nor beam on mortal eye:
And as some dreaded whirlwind in the night
Swirls through the air embers of dying fires,
So shall the Breath of God, foretold of yore,
Sweep star and sun and system, and their light
Shall be as sparks from smouldering funeral pyres
Darkened and dead, and Time shall be no more.

TO A GENERAL OF THE REVOLUTION

1776

INTREPID Orator and Statesman bold,
At whose impetuous and impassioned words
Men dropped the plowshare and took up their swords
To fight for Freedom, in the days of old,
Forgotten art thou in this lust for gold,
Although thy strong and stirring life records
Deeds that were noble. But this age rewards
With calm neglect thy labors manifold.
Champion of Liberty, and of the Right;
Brother in perilous arms to Washington;
Thou zealous Ruler of a glorious State,—
Is there no way thy service to requite? . . .
Sleep, Patriot, Sleep! nor ever know the great
Ingratitude of Freedom for her son!

ON THE AVON AT STRATFORD IN 1616

Shakespeare loquitur

DAY's gathered beauty in the sunset lies
Rich on the clouds of Arden, as of yore;—
So shall I pass in splendor! Now, once more,
Visions unfolding, greet mine inner eyes:
Again my Fancy's children fill the skies;
And Ariel-voices, from some spirit shore,
Bid this tried falcon slip the leash, and soar
To find in unwinged realms undreamt emprise.
Clarions of onset, now too long withdrawn,
Sound in my soul. Pageants and phantom files
Of new creations through my future stream;
And from the prime, a shadow in my dream,
The sweet "Dark Lady" of Circean wiles
Calls from the primrose path of wasteful Dawn.

THE MADONNA

WITH THE CHRIST CHILD AND JOHN THE BAPTIST

—AN OLD PAINTING—

By premonitions, Mary, art thou stirred,
While the young Babe looks upward to thy face?
For thou so fondly pensive, seem'st to trace
An unknown grief impending, yet deferred.
Thy mouth is sweet with silence,—not a word
Parts the pure lips; that calm brow doth erase
All look of suffering by its saintly grace,
And yet—some voice prophetic thou hast heard!
Doth a dim prescience of the invading years
Cause thee, with such solicitude, to bend
Above the innocent pair about thy knee?
Dost thou divine the anguish deep—the tears—
For these two little ones the pitiful end—
The shadow of Herod and of Calvary?

"YOUTH ON THE PROW"

THE SUSQUEHANNA

As Evening, aureoled with her amber hair,
Walked o'er the mountain, robed in faded blue,
Sandaed with silence in the glowing air,
How sweet it was to drift alone with you!
'T was ours to watch the heron as he flew
To purpling pools within his reedy lair;
Leaving the glimmering land, we bade adieu
To all the dwellers in the tents of Care.
We drifted noiseless o'er the deepening glow
Trailing our hands through miles of liquid gold,
Then moored in shallows where the lilies rest;
The somnolent River scarcely seemed to flow,
While o'er the hills, afar, began to fold
The crimsoned poppies of the fading West.

SOCRATES' DEATH

FROM PLATO'S PHÆDO

THEN from the prison walls they saw the sun
Folding great wings within the western skies—
A few friends round him there who slowly dies.
The grinding of the poison being done,
He spake, reproved their tears, and to each one
Gave cheer and comfort, and made kind replies;
Then drank the hemlock, while his great grave eyes
Dwelt on his friends. The sands were nearly run
Down through his glass of life; he from that bed
Smiling upon them faintly, turned and said,
“The chill is at my heart. . . . Do not forget
To pay to Æsculapius our just debt!”
Then Crito closed his eyes,—for he was dead,—
And looked up weeping—and the sun had set!

FROM THE PEAK

HIGH on the mountain, brother to the cloud,
I stand upon this elemental stone
Freer than kings upon their native throne.
The wind whirls the leaves onward in a crowd
And shrieks around the bleak crag wild and loud;
I hear the muttering and the thunder tone
Of dark and ominous storms, that not alone
Earth, but the cowering heavens, now enshroud.

Land of my birth! so looking over thee
The Poet sees from his prophetic peak
Havoc and whirlwind brewing. We are free,—
But powers are at work that crawl and sneak,
Yet hold, no less, the fatal lightning streak.
Be warned! This storm is aimed at Liberty.

THEY COME AT EVENING

TO S. F. H.

THINK not because upon these slopes of green
Thou hear'st no footstep follow, that alone
I tread this vale, and on these crags of stone
At set of sun, or in the twilight sheen,
Walk by myself. Round me at times convene
Illustrious Shades, that from their airy zone,
Stand with me here upon this mountain throne,
And solace with low voices not terrene.
They come at evening as an avatar:
Great ones with laureled brows and glorious eyes
Bright with fulfillment of their prophecies;
With voices like the voices of a star:
Some hover near,—and others—faint, afar—
Pace the horizon in the twilight skies.

THE STORMY PETREL

TO G. B. M.

ONWARD forever by thy spirit borne,
Bird of the dim illimitable seas,
Winging wild gulfs of water at thine ease
When all the surging waves with winds are torn!
Thou for the shore hast unabating scorn;
With heart heroic to the howling breeze
Thou trustest life and all thy destinies—
O wanderer of the wildering sea forlorn!
Ah, by that demon, too, am I possessed,
That drives thee through the storm at any cost:
Bird of the wave! my soul, as thine, is crossed
By the same spirit of undying quest—
Far on the shoreless ocean of unrest
Driven forever, and forever tossed!

IN THE VALLEY OF DREAMS

I YEARNED for knowledge and her starry beams,—
For radiance of imperial thought I sighed;
The more I searched that shining shore and wide,
The further from me flowed the wondrous streams.
Then in the cave of sleep that dimly gleams,
The rudder of volition slipped aside,
And night brought to me what the day denied—
The rich phantasmagoria of Dreams:
So one at noon, within a sunlit field,
Peers at the blank impenetrable sky,
To find his vision bounded as with bars;
Then entering some deep shaft, he sees on high,
Up through its tube of darkness, there revealed
The imperishable splendor of the stars.

SAMSON

BENT upon love, and beautiful as day,
Samson the youth to Timnath passed along;
Musing of her, he hummed a desert song,—
When lo! a lion barred his onward way.
Who would be victor in the unequal fray?
He thought of love, and laughed that he was strong,
And conquered. Little did he deem, ere long,
That lion Passion him would heartless slay.
How many a man in youth's supremest hour
Who fells the lions in his path, will find
Some dread Delilah, as the years entice;
Shorn of his will and of his pristine power,
He—following the primrose path of vice—
Falls with the falling temple of his mind!

THE COLOR PINK

SUGGESTED BY KEATS' SONNET ON BLUE

FIRST as a babe I saw its flower unfurl
Within a mother's cheek, and memory glows
Yet with the tint. Not broadcast nature sows
Such color; oft 't is hidden in the whorl
Of voiceful sea-shell sweet-lipped like a girl,
Or in the wave where branchèd coral grows;
Or lovelier still, where the pursuing rose
Chases the fleeing green in mother-o'-pearl:
'T is the sky's jewel at each morning's brink;
'T is Love's own tinge, and everywhere divine
And beauteous, but most ravishing I think,
When the flushed cheek of that dear Lædy mine
At parting, pales pathetically pink—
Leaning from out her latticed eglantine!

THE GIFT

INSCRIBED TO THE REV. CANON WILTON, M.A.

SACRED and sylvan Poet! when I hold
Your book of Verse, which o'er the winter sea
You send—a later flower of song—to me,
I scent the Yorkshire hawthorn. On the wold,
Or where the billows of heather-bloom are rolled
Up breezy slopes; by many a storied lea;
By Yarrow and Iona, pensively,
Lured by your lines I stroll where you have strolled:
But when, with eloquent words of ardent love,
Bent on that City of Immortal Light,
Your faith uplifts you to intemporal things,
I follow—faltering—to that realm above;
Fain would I equal your celestial flight
And mount, like you, on such triumphal wings!

PSAPHO

IN ancient times, 't is said, this Libyan
Tamed hosts of birds, and with a deep design,
Taught them to say, "Psapho's a god divine!"
Then turned them loose. And many a caravan,
Halting at wells 'twixt Cairo and Kairwan,
Hearing the birds, believed in Psapho's line;
While others doubted, and by palm and pine
Smiled on their camels tinkling to Assuan.
There's many a clique within our daily ken
Which drills the voices of its pert Reviews
To utter and re-utter, like cuckoos,
That *they* divine are 'mong the ranks of men;
But as we read, we think of Psapho's ruse—
The Libyan with his birds is back again!

THE PALE RIDER

At last I felt the ominous black air quake
With far-off beating of their hornèd wings
Before they came—enormous, baleful Things—
Harpy, chimera, scaly wingèd snake
With dugs of witches, roaring in the wake
Of him who furious rode, and held the stings
Of adders in his hand. A million kings
Slain in his path could not his ravin slake.
Onward he plunged, and as he came, I saw
High on his eyeless skull a crown was wreathed;
Scepter he held, and sword he never sheathed;
Headlong he rushed. Gaunt was his empty maw
Though he devoured the world and all that breathed:
I looked, and fell before him dead, from awe.

BY CONOWINGO WATERS

As Evening came, sedate in hooded gray,
A wondrous quiet on the valley fell;
Across the fields a distant-tolling bell
Made a sweet threnode for departing day.
The mavis, on the topmost wildwood spray,
Ceased the low fluting of his late farewell,
And in dark flocks, above the bosky dell,
The crows winged slowly where the woodlands lay.
The twilight deepened. Pale ethereal seas
Of lilac 'mid the branches slowly grew
Star-studded depths unutterably blue;
While in the upper boughs a delicate breeze
Sent soft Druidic murmurs rippling through
The faint and tremulant lyre of the trees.

NILUS

MEN say her source is in wild mountain glooms,
But where—even the dark Sphinx never knows!
Kingdoms in ashes, past them all she flows,
And dust of monarchs and swart queens she dooms
To lie along her sands. She laves the tombs
Of tyrants long forgotten, even those
Who built their dais on her nation's woes
And in her people's heart-blood dipped their plumes.
And still her banks are strewn with human bones;
Her wave is crimsoned with the cruel things
Done by her despots; on her shore the groans
Of dusky millions. . . . Hearken! as she sings
The decimation of the tyrant thrones,
The fate of Empire, and the dirge of Kings!

EROS

'NEATH yonder moon-lit archway like the Moors',
Luscious of limb, and languorously dull,
Balefully sweet and darkly beautiful,
The Nautch girls, o'er the tessellated floors,
Come tinkling down the distant corridors
With somnolent sounds that soon all cares annul,
And leave the listener dreamy, in the glooms,
Lapped in the glamour of Circean shores:
'Mid scent of sandal-wood and strange perfumes,
One hardly hears the nightingale that pours
Her soul out by the fountain where she soars;
The air is love-oppressed; Love's very plumes
Pulse with the passion that his life consumes—
Where clambering roses close the curtained doors.

ARRIVAL OF THE "WELCOME"

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE FIRST LANDING OF

WILLIAM PENN IN PENNSYLVANIA

How beautiful she looked in that far day
With all her canvas flying to the breeze,—
The stately "Welcome," from the stormy seas,
Wafted on dove-like wings along the bay!
"Peace on the Earth," her fluttering pennons say,
And from her deck a voice: "Good-will to men!"
For he had come, the courtly Quaker, Penn,
Full of his dream of philanthropic sway.

And must the feet of Progress ever be
Incarnadined by still recurring wars,
While from her path is swept each barbarous horde?
Oh, may this Land, now under thrall of Mars,
End her red slaughter by the Asian sea,
And sheathe her once inviolable sword!

ESTRANGED

WITHIN the sunshine of your gracious smile
I spread my leaves and rapturously grew,
Rearing my towering branches to the blue
Because your nature seemed so sweet the while.
And though I would not your fair fame revile,
The current of your being which I knew
Has changed, and I am wasting from your view,
Worn by the slow abrasion of your guile.
So some alluvial island in mid-stream,
Bowery with elm and bending sycamore—
That kissed the summer waters in a dream—
Is, by a change of channel, made the prey
Of currents whose corrosions gnaw the shore
And waste it irretrievably away!

A THRENE

MAURICE THOMPSON

A DEEPER hush is on the prairie's plain;
Far in the dark savanna's plashy meads
The heron, lonelier, stands among her weeds,
And e'en our woodlands have a touch of pain.
Gone is the singer of the sylvan strain
Whose note the indifferent world but little heeds;
Put by the syrinx of the seven reeds,
Our minstrel now will never pipe again!
He who along the dewy forest streams
Fluted at dawn full many a silver hymn
Lies not within yon churchyard's lone retreat;
But in some region beyond telling sweet
In immaterial valleys, strange and dim,
He lingers, lapped in never-ending dreams.

AFRICA

LIKE some nocturnal lily that shall bloom

In centuries hence, we watch thee; in our dream

See in thy swamps the Prospero of our steam;

Thy doors unlocked, where knowledge in her tomb
Hath lain innumerable years in gloom.

Then shalt thou, waking with that morning's gleam,

Shine as thy sister lands with equal beam;

But Indian-like, thy race hath met its doom:

As tidal waves that strike some midnight shore

Rush, and with white irrevocable hands

Sweep clean the coast of all the horde of sands,

So the great waves of Franks that onward pour,

Shall sweep thy swart race sheer from off thy lands

To death, and life shall know them there no more.

THE BARD

FROM immemorial times men have agreed
Their greatest are the Poet, Architect,
Painter, Musician,—those who do elect
To build the Beautiful; to ever feed
The cravings of the soul with starry deed;
Those who their solitary thought project
Into the ideal world, and there erect
The cloudy fanes of an ethereal creed.
Yet not to all, however great and strong—
Though each a master of his subtile art—
Not equally to these the bays belong;
But, in the vast Valhalla of man's heart,
Niched above all, and eminent apart,
The Poet stands,—soul of immortal Song!

"THESE THINGS I SAW"

I WANDERED on through dark mysterious deeps;
I stood on beetling cliffs that loomed sublime
Above vast valleys, where for countless time
Gathers fertility which useless sleeps
Where never through the soil one flower peeps;
Dark caves with floating pendants of green slime,
Through which strange Things did ever crawl and climb,
Near the dread Monster that encoiled keeps
Listening forever for the trump's commands;
Lovers were there, clasped with convulsive hands;
Jewels, and crowns and scepters; precious stones
Rolled in the eyes of skulls; and whitened bones
Forever shifting over shifting sands:
These things I saw within the sea's dim zones.

MARPESSA TO APOLLO

HAD I but chosen thee, immortal One,
Instead of him I clave to, then for me
Had been supernal joys with hope to be
Uplifted by communion with the Sun:
Thy wingèd pair, in time, I might have won
And held the reins of Dawn,—triumphantly
Flushed the gray doors, and flamed the dusky sea
With flakes from crimsoned hoofs when day was done,—
Have felt the heart of godhead stir my breast,
And spirit lips ethereal breathe on mine
From deeps of Being beyond mortal dream . . .
Ah yet, each evening, when along the West
Thou goest in splendor with thy radiant team,
Behold these Earth-dimmed eyes that yearn to thine!

THE VICTIM

THE River, turning red, began to rise;
Dark thousands thronged the marge with sail and oar,
As priests of dread Osiris slowly bore
The Maiden, bound,—a votive sacrifice.
Lashed to the stake—death's horror in her eyes—
They left her, quivering, by the river shore,
But ere the sunset, lo, a deepening roar
Of rising waters drowned the people's cries.
The Nilus lapped her feet, then from their ships
The swart crowd gloated at the river's might
As round her writhing form the current poured;
Touching her neck—it reached her piteous lips,
Then wildly rushing, welmed her down from sight,
While calm, above, the sacred Ibis soared.

IN AFTER DAYS

AH, yes! in those inevitable days—
Not so far distant but I see the rim
Of their horizon looming—then of him
It shall be said, who writes these roundelays,
“Lo, he is gone—gone down Death’s darksome ways.”
But when they ope his heart, love’s paradigm
Shall meet their look, and hardened eyes shall swim—
A name graved there shall dash them with amaze.

So it befalls some traveler, in that zone
That followed on the age Silurian,
Who, with a mere incurious interest stirred,
Breaks carelessly a road-side rock in twain,
And, startled, finds the footmarks of a bird
Imperishably printed in the stone.

LADRO

STATUE IN METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

I AM that sacrilegious one, the same
Whose lie beheaded Nona; erewhile seen
By him, that tattling scribbler Florentine,
Ages ago in Hell; and lest foul fame
Of me should fade, Albano lately came,
And carved in stone—like life itself, I ween—
Me the base church thief, tied with snakes unclean,—
A marble perpetuity of shame!
Art's immortality of infamy
Now coats me ever as this viper slime.
Accursèd be the sculptor! and may I
Burn this Carrara, kiln-like, into lime—
Fanged as I am to death, unendingly,
By knots of venomèd serpents, for my crime!

THE WIND-GOD

THOU dark-winged demon of Cimmerian lands,
Who com'st from caverns of the unfooted vast,
The raging tempest and the roaring blast
Thou holdest in the hollow of thy hands!
Typhoon, the dreaded, raves at thy commands,
Leaving the mariner helpless and aghast;
Thou strewest many a ship and shattered mast—
Thy cenotaphs unnumbered, on the sands!
Lo, o'er the surging Ocean, even now
Speed the swift javelins of thy phrensied might!
O charioteer infuriate! it is thou
Who, in thy mad ungovernable glee,
Across the blackness of the gathering night,
Lashest the wild-maned Horses of the Sea!

THE FADING SHIP

FAR on the faint horizon's shadowy rim,
A moving vision o'er the evening sea,
How beautiful she seems—so earthly free—
With spectral sail and fading pennon dim!
Is she a Ship of Dreams? or does she swim
Of Beauty the eidolon? or is she
The sweet embodiment of mystery
Blending with twilight on the ocean's brim? . . .
Some Spirit whose faintly glimmering wings
Fade in the far-off realms of halcyon air?
At last unfettered, as she outward springs,
Is she the Soul of Peace fleeing from Care,
Leaving behind the sad terrestrial things—
Seeking nepenthe in the distance fair?

ECHOES OF GREEK IDYLS

IN MEMORY

OF

THEOCRITUS

*. . . To the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders*

—MILTON

SELECTIONS FROM BION

THE LAMENT FOR ADONIS

I

Woe, woe for sweet Adonis, he is dead!
The beauteous Adon, comely past compare!
The lily youth with hyacinthine hair
Low on the ground doth droop his princely head!
The hearts of all the Loves for him have bled.
No more, O Cypris, filled with thy despair,
In sleep thy purple raiment thou dost wear,
But, sable-stoled, thy feet the shadows tread.
Arise, thou wretched one, oh, now arise!
Make the air tremble with thy dolorous moan,
And beat thy breasts and wail unto the skies:
"Gone is that golden voice of mellowest tone,
Perished the love-light of his glowing eyes,
And I am left all desolate and alone!"

THE LAMENT FOR ADONIS

II

UPON the hills Adonis lieth low,—

The wooded hills beneath the Idalian sky,—
And all the wondrous whiteness of his thigh
That looked as fair as newly-fallen snow,

Is by the boar's tusk gashed, and trickling slow

The dark blood stains the ground with crimson dye;
Heavy and dim now droops his fading eye,
And marble-cold that ever beauteous brow.

His dying kiss has come to sudden pause,—

That kiss that Cypris never would resign,—
And from his face is paling out the rose;

For though his form her loving arms entwine,

He cannot feel that with her breath she draws
His very soul back ere it deathward goes.

THE LAMENT FOR ADONIS

III

AH, cruel, cruel was his deadly wound,
But in her heart doth Cytherea bear
A deeper hurt than his who lieth there!
The very dogs—each well-belovèd hound—
Bay o'er their master lying on the ground.
And Aphrodite, now in her despair,
Unsandalèd, wretched, through the thorns that tear,
Wanders and wails with tangled locks unbound.
Through the lone woodlands is her anguish borne;
Lamenting him, she wildly raving goes,
Calling his name, not once, but o'er and o'er;
While round his body, from his wound new-torn,
The scarlet stream of life-blood spouting flows,
Till all his blanchèd breast is dark with gore.

THE LAMENT FOR ADONIS

IV

SORROW her sacred beauty now doth slay;
Her cup of grief is filled unto the brim;
And Cypris' loveliness is growing dim
Which, while Adonis lived, knew no decay.
Woe, woe for Cypris! all the mountains say;
While all the oaks, from every ancient limb,
Make solemn answer, *Woe, ah, woe for him!*
And mourning fills the groves, and glooms the day.
The murmurous rivers purling in the vale
Moan for lorn Aphrodite as they go,
And weeping too are all the mountain wells;
The flowers in anguish red and redder grow,
While Cytherea through the upland dells
Shrills on the listening air her piteous wail.

THE LAMENT FOR ADONIS

V

FOR when she saw the wound of Adon bleed,—
When she who loved him knew that he had died,
With her the hardest heart had mourned and sighed,
The end deploring of that bloody deed:
“Leave me not yet in this my bitter need!”
With arms aloft, she passionately cried;
“O my belovèd, stay—with me abide!
Lip pressed to lip! ah, hear me piteous plead!
Oh, wake, Adonis, do not from me go,
Kiss me again, my sweet, the final kiss,
Till from thy inmost heart deep into mine—
Into my very soul—thy love doth flow;
Kiss me again, O best beloved, divine,
That I may drain the very deeps of bliss!”

THE LAMENT FOR ADONIS

VI

"THAT kiss which thou hast left me will I prize
E'en as thyself, O thou most precious thing!—
Thou who must face dark Acheron's hateful king
In realms Plutonian, far from mortal skies.
Wretched, forlorn, what means can I devise,
Being a goddess,—ah, the cruel sting!—
To follow thee and to thy side to cling
Where streams Lethean greet the wondering eyes?

Take him, my lover, O Persephone,
For thou, alas, art stronger far than I,
And all of beauty drifts at last to thee!—
Take thou my lord, who, fading, here doth lie;—
Lo, Sorrow sets her burning crown on me,
And now all life seems but one lingering sigh!"

THE LAMENT FOR ADONIS

VII

“NAY, I am widowed since that thou art gone,
O thrice-desired, with thy comely grace,—
Thou who didst love the dangers of the chase,
Following thy hounds at earliest flush of dawn
While in the fern yet sleeps the dappled fawn.
Thy death my beauty's girdle will efface;
In all the world none e'er can take thy place,
Since thou art to the Stygian doors withdrawn.”

.
Ah, for each drop the dying Adon bled,
Upon the earth, like rain, her grief she showers,
And all the groves are filled with sounds of rue;—
Now that Adonis fair is cold and dead,
The blood and tears bring forth two lovely flowers,—
His blood, the rose; her tears, the wind-flower blue.

THE LAMENT FOR ADONIS

VIII

"No more 'mid oaken woods, oh, now no more
May I lament for him and vainly weep;
These forest leaves, new-gathered in a heap,
Not fitting are for one that I adore;
Oh, let him have my couch, and, covered o'er,
Let him as erst the holy slumber keep,
Fair as a babe new-fallen into sleep,—
For e'en in death he is death's conqueror.
Strew wreathèd flowers, dewy with the prime,
Upon the ground where he doth pale repose;
Sprinkle his body with Assyrian nard
And fragrant spices of some Austral clime;—
Nay, perish all sweet scents from my regard,—
He was my perfume, and my perfect rose!"

THE LAMENT FOR ADONIS

IX

DRAPED in his purple raiment Adon lies,
And near him Loves are weeping in the air;
Sorrowing aloud, they clip their golden hair
And drop the ringlets with suffusèd eyes;
And one the darts hath broke, 'mid tender sighs,
Another, stooping, with the gentlest care
Hath loosed the sandals of Adonis fair,
While others, grieving, hover in the skies.
Many are sighing down the mournful wind,
And round his pallid form are fluttering now;
One laves the wound the cruel tusk did plow,
And still another, coming from behind,
Draws near the dead, and piteously kind,
Fans, with his little wings, Adonis' brow.

THE LAMENT FOR ADONIS

X

THE torches on the lintel of the door

Hymen hath quenched and made to flicker down;

And he hath torn to shreds the bridal crown,

And Hymen's hymn is sung no more, no more!

Woe, woe for sweet Adonis, o'er and o'er

The weepers sing, and mourn his bright renown;

No gladness can their grief a moment drown;—

Woe, woe for Adon, whom they all deplore.

.

Cease, Cytherea, from thy grieving sore,

Weep thou for him again another year;

For though the Muses call beseechingly,

He cannot come, in spite of prayer or tear;—

No mortal voice he heeds on Pluto's shore

Held in the shadows by Persephone.

THE HUSBANDMAN, THE FOWLER, AND LOVE

A FOWLER boy was hunting in the glade
For merles and thrushes and the gentle dove,
When on a box-tree bough the wingèd Love
Perched, bird-like; and the crafty hunter laid
His toils in vain, for hopping, unafraid,
The little restless Mischief did not move
From out the shadow of the ilex grove.
In hopeless quest the lad no longer stayed,
But, while his breast with anger sore was stirred,
Sought out the teacher of his art, who said:
"Give up the chase; let the sly elf alone;
Seek not to snare this evil-minded bird,
For, though he shuns thee now, when thou art grown
He'll come uncalled, and perch upon thy head!"

THE TUTOR OF LOVE

ONCE Cypris, leading Eros, said to me,
"Kind Shepherd, take this boy I bring to you,—
Teach him to sing as sweetly as you do."
Straightway I showed him all my minstrelsy;—
Played on the flutes, and took him on my knee;
How Hermes made the lyre, I told him, too,
And how Apollo, god of music, drew
From golden chords goldener melody.
These, in my innocence, to Love I taught,
But he, not heeding, sang of man's desire—
Of mortal's love, and of his mother's smiles.
Lo, I became the scholar, and I caught
The soul of all his songs, and all their fire,—
Forgot my teachings as I learned his wiles!

LOVE AND THE MUSES

THE wild boy, Love, though full of all deceit,
The Muses cherish and do never fear,
But follow him their darling, doubly dear;
From loveless-minded men, with hurrying feet
They flee away, nor teach them numbers sweet,
Nor honeyed tones Pierian, golden-clear;
But when one, love-smit, chaunts, they give him cheer,
And gladly run his joyous steps to greet.
A witness to this truth myself I bring,
For if I venture upon other themes
Sky-born or merely mortal, even then
My music falters in my breast; but when
Of Lycidas and Love I gladly sing,
Forth from mellifluous lips the carol streams!

VANITY OF VANITIES

OH, if were doubled the brief mortal span
Through the wise gods or by inconstant Fate,—
Ah, could he spend one-half in joy, elate,
And one in labor under labor's ban,
Then he could toil, and after resting, man
Might win reward; but since is fixed his date,
How heavy is the weary, weary weight
Of burdens carried since his day began!
When wealth is won we covet wealth again;
Strangle our souls to lay base riches by;
Slave at laborious art, we know not why,
And seek the shades, alas, who knoweth when?
How brief the hour allowed to mortal men!
Do they forget they are condemned to die?

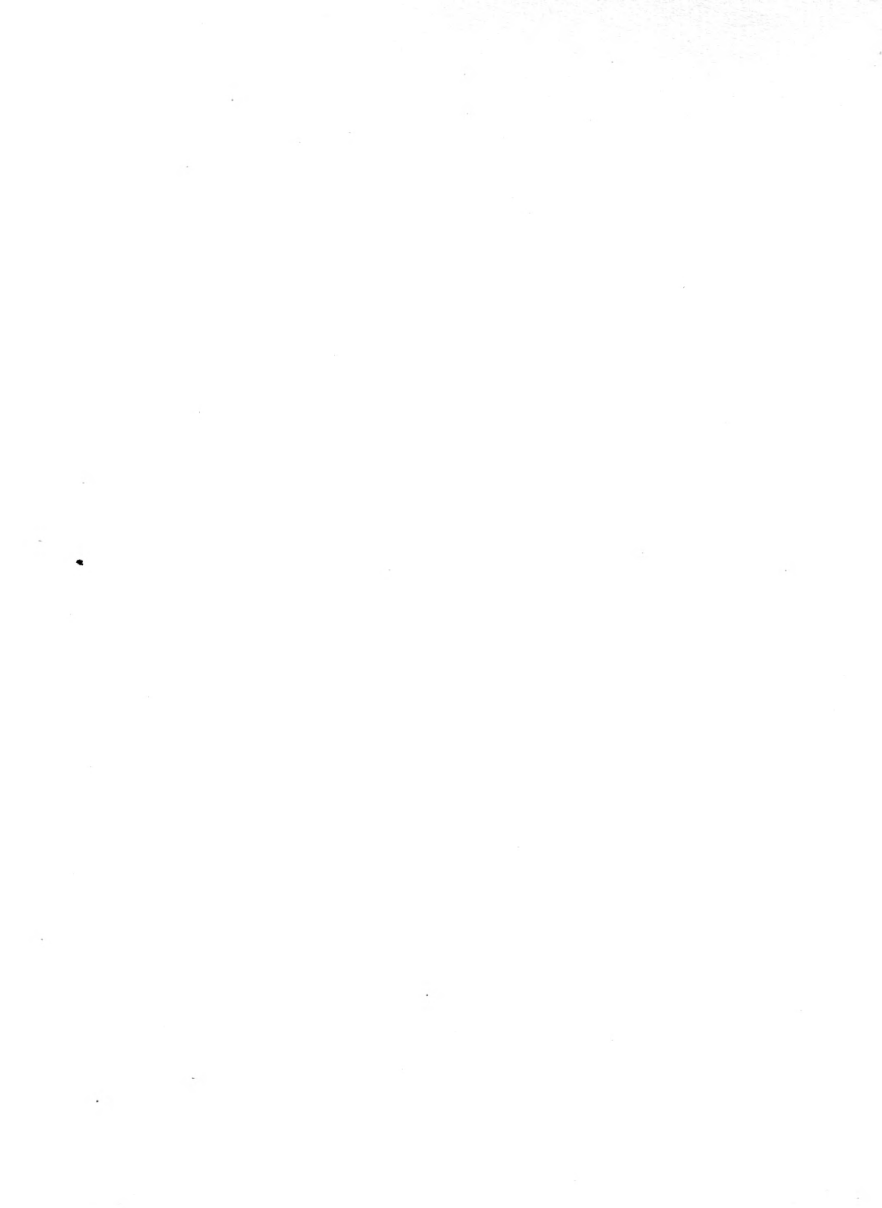
TO THE EVENING STAR

O HESPER, golden light of eve serene,
Lamp of the lovely daughter of the foam,
Thou sacred jewel of the deep blue dome,
Dimmer as much than Cynthia, silver queen,—
Who sinking slowly, yonder now is seen,—
As thou art brighter than all stars that roam
The skies! oh, guide me to the shepherd's home
The while I lead the revel o'er the green.
The moon wanes fast; lend me thy beams divine,
Illume the woods and dusky thickets nigh,
Show me the way with thy refulgent light,
And bring me safely to my longed-for shrine;
No brigand, throttling travelers in the night,
But a true lover, bent on love, am I.

TO CYPRIS

MOTHER of Love, mild goddess, Cyprus-born,
Daughter of Zeus,—though child of foam and wave,—
Why 'gainst immortals and all men dost rave?
Nay, rant of them in bitterest, scathing scorn?
Why wert thou so with passionate anger torn
That thy most beauteous body erewhile gave
Birth to that boy—the subtle, wicked knave—
The heartless Love who makes the whole world mourn?
Ah, why, sweet Cypris, didst thou give him wings
And teach the wily god to shoot so far?
His cruel mind is so unlike his shape,
And calm of spirit he doth ever mar;
Child though he is, oh, we may ne'er escape
The galling anguish of his bitter stings!

SELECTIONS FROM MOSCHUS



LOVE, THE ABSCONDER

CUPID, the rogue!—my darling runaway—

Oh, who hath seen him where the cross-roads meet?

His skin all blushing, and how honey-sweet

His wily voice, I, Cypris, may not say!

More than a kiss from me shall be thy pay

If thou return him; but, oh, be discreet,

For on that saucy brow is writ deceit,

And both his tongue and tiny hands betray!

If thou shouldst see him, bind, and hither bring

The rosy scamp; but do not his desire,—

Let not his lips to thine an instant cling!

And should he tempt with gift of arrows dire

Or gilded bow, refuse each treacherous thing,

For all his armature is dipped in fire!

EUROPA AND THE BULL

I

To fair Europa, once upon a time,
Sweet Cypris sent a mystic-laden dream:
'T was in the third watch, when rare visions stream
From out the dusky portals of the prime;
When sleep, more sweet than honey or than rhyme,
Lulls the lax spirit with some popped theme
That binds the eyelids in that soft demesne,
When wingèd fancies float from other clime.
Then as the vision-bringing harbinger
Stood by the threshold of the shadowy door
Of virgin thoughts that trouble and perplex,
She saw two Continents at strife for her,—
Asia the one,—one th' Hesperian shore:
Both in the shape—but vaster—of her sex.

EUROPA AND THE BULL

II

AND one of these had glorious, sorrowing eyes—
She was the stranger, come from that far land;
The other took Europa by the hand,
Clung round her neck appealing in this wise:
“I nursed thee, child, and thee do idolize,”
But still that other, 'neath her fillet-band,
Reproving looked, and spake in high command:
“By Zeus, fair maiden, thou shalt be my prize!”
With beating heart in fear Europa sped
Forth from her couch, so clear she viewed the dream—
For, though awake, she saw the vision still;
Then long upon her soft enticing bed
Silent she sat, and, like a little stream
Leaf-hid and timorous—some faint-hearted rill—

EUROPA AND THE BULL

III

HER voice went trembling on in dazed surprise

Sweet as the sacred brook Pierian :

“Oh, who of all ye gods that mortals scan

Hath sent these phantoms to my wondering eyes?

Are these strange visions meant to terrorize?

Or do they herald some celestial plan

Of happiness beyond the thought of man?

Who was the alien woman in such guise?

For her a longing seizes on my heart;

How kind she looked, how graciously severe,

As she my cheek unto her bosom drew!

It seemed as if I could not from her part:

Ah, all ye blessèd gods, I pray you hear,

Fulfill my dream,—oh, let it all come true!”

EUROPA AND THE BULL

IV

THEN timid she arose and went to seek
The maidens of her train—the lily girls
Whose loosely-filleted and wandering curls
Clustered around each glowing, rosy cheek;
Daughters that noble sires plain bespeak,
With voices sweeter than the morning merles,—
Fresh buds of rarest maidenhood, the pearls
Of purple Tyre,—sea-crownèd queen antique.
In all Europa's sports they would engage,
And their most beauteous bodies oft would they
Bathe where the silver rivers meet the sea,
Or in the dance float on in bright array;
Then on some flower-marauding pilgrimage
Together pluck the lilies of the lea.

EUROPA AND THE BULL

V

AND there she found her comrade-maidens dear
Along the ocean on the rolling dunes,
Where the spent sea leaves shallow blue lagoons
That show the roots of rushes, amber-clear;
Rare joy it was for them to wander here,
For, though 't was morning, the full-orbèd moon's
Pale face smiled down, and far they heard the tunes
Sung by the surge across the sleeping mere.
And in her hand each maiden, o'er the leas,
A basket bare, for roses they would cull;
But fair Europa's was of gold, inlaid,
Sculptured, embossed, by great Hephæstus made,
Rich-wreathed with carven shapes of deities,—
Once Telephassa's, and most wonderful!

EUROPA AND THE BULL

VI

AND now the girls took ever fresh delight,
As soon as on the meads their feet were set,
In gathering flowers; one the violet
Divine and blue; others the exquisite
Low-creeping thyme, and, in rich purple dight,
The hyacinth; or with a faint regret
Dropt many a petal down all dewy-wet,
Or culled the poet's flower—narcissus white.
But in the midst of this fair lily band,
The Princess, with her ardent little hand,
The sumptuous splendor of the scarlet rose
Plucked, lightly, with a touch imperial:
Then queenly 'mid the graceful group she goes,
And, like to Cypris, dwarfs her rivals all.

EUROPA AND THE BULL

VII

THEN Zeus them seeing, changed himself at sight
Unto a bull, Europa's love to gain :
Not to such beast as in the burdened wain
Beneath the yoke still sweats in sorry plight,
Feeds in the stall, or from the dawn till night
Drags on the curvèd plough in toilful pain,—
Nay, but a bull of an immortal strain,
Whose more than human eye doth love incite.
His lordly body brightest chestnut shone ;
A silver star was set within his brow ;
His looks with soft desire did importune ;
And from his foretop two branched horns were thrown,
As when a flake of cloud divides the bow
And leaves the two curves of the crescent moon.

EUROPA AND THE BULL

VIII

HE came into the meadow in his pride
Among the beauteous daughters gathered there;
And they had yearnings deep to touch his hair
And lay white hands upon his silken hide.
His heavenly fragrance round was wafted wide,
Sweeter than perfume of the pastures fair;
He closer drew, Europa to ensnare,
And licked her cheek, and soft the virgin eyed.
Around his neck her arms she interwove,
While from his mouth she wiped the foam that ran,
And kissed his lips, by passionate love distraught;—
Against his spell the Princess vainly strove;—
Then the bull lowed so sweetly, that you thought
You heard the dulcet flute Mygdonian!

EUROPA AND THE BULL

IX

HE bowed himself before her sandaled feet
And bent his neck, and on the maiden gazed;
While his great loins enticed her and amazed;
Then gently did she her fair maids entreat:
“Come, dear my playmates, make my joy complete,
Mount me upon the bull, and be not dazed,
For ne’er a beast in fair Phœnicia grazed,
So honest, mild, so gentle and discreet!”
Then on his back, secure, she smiling sat
And bade her rosy comrades follow too;
But from the ground great Zeus arose thereat—
Impelled by love’s impetuosity—
And, though she waved despairing hands in rue,
On, like a dolphin, sped across the sea.

EUROPA AND THE BULL

X

AND straight the tossed foam settled into blue,
And waves were leveled in the ocean dells;
The dolphins tumbled in subsiding swells,
And Nereids rode upon their sea-beasts too.
While he, the Shaker of the World, came through
The briny paths whose ridgèd waves he quells,
To guide his brother, where, with whorlèd shells
The Triton trumpeters swept into view:
With human torso and with dolphin tail,
Round him they gathered in a joyous throng,
And in the wave their shining colors cast;
Each lifted to his lips the sea-shell frail,
And, as the bull-god and Europa passed,
Blew from the raisèd conchs a bridal song!

EUROPA AND THE BULL

XI

MEANWHILE Europa on the bull divine
Grew piteous pallid at her plight forlorn ;
While one hand clasp'd the great beast's glowing horn,
The other in her mantle did entwine
Lest it should trail within the flying brine.
The azure robe on her sweet shoulders worn,
Puffed by the wind, sail-like, was backward borne,
As sped they to the dim sea's far confine.
But when no longer landmarks could be seen,—
Far from surf-beaten headlands of her home,
Or lofty cliff well-loved, along the shore,—
When all was moving mounds and wastes of green
With dark illimitable fields of foam,
Her voice brake forth and this the wail it bore :

EUROPA AND THE BULL

XII

"OH, whither wilt thou bear me, wondrous bull?
How know'st the paths the ocean-monsters take?
What food is thine? and what thy thirst doth slake?
Hast thou some spirit to guide thee like the gull,
And potency the rolling wave to lull?
The sea a path for flying ships doth make,
But beasts for this their pastures ne'er forsake;
Nay, thou art then some god most worshipful!
Lo, not the dolphin with his rainbow fin
Fares on the land, nor kine upon the deep;
But fearless thou dost pass the sea and shores;
Across the boundless-bosomed hyaline,
And by the grottoes where the mermen sleep,
With thy wild hoofs thou speedest as with oars!

EUROPA AND THE BULL

XIII

“PERCHANCE then thou wilt rise within the air
And speed on bird-like wings afar on high;
Alas for me! no marvel that I sigh,
For my mischance is more than I can bear.
Far from my father's house I sadly fare;
It may be in the gray sea I shall die,
For who could here a helpless maid descry?
Oh, lonely am I and I know not where!
Surely some deity will give me aid!
Oh, thou the Shaker of the Earth, divine,
Propitious come, and meet me on the wave—
Me, Telephassa's daughter, sore afraid—
Surely I see thee coming me to save
Who drop these tears in the unfeeling brine!”

EUROPA AND THE BULL

XIV

So moaned she, and the hornèd bull replied :
"Take courage, maid, the dread deep dread not thou ;
For Zeus am I, even I,—though veiled now
In semblance of a beast which thou dost ride ;
Still am I Zeus, and still am deified ;
Ah, 't was the love of thy fair lily brow
And bosom whiter than the Pelion snow
That in this bovine made my godhead hide.
In Crete, that loometh there beyond the sea,
With all her vast and opulent dominion,
There shall thy bridal bed be made, and then
Thou from the loins of Zeus—yea, even from me,
Shalt bear great, golden-gifted, glorious sons,
Sole scepter-swaying monarchs over men !"

EUROPA AND THE BULL

xv

So said the god, and voiced the words of fate:
 Soon o'er the wave the rim of Crete upreared;
 And when the coast grew greener, and they neared
 The yellow sands, he donned his godhead straight,
Then loosed the girdle of his lovely mate;
 And by their side the rosy Hours appeared
 To deck the bridal bed; and, golden-sphered,
 The stars came out in more than regal state.

.
Mother she was of Minos called the Just—
 The king lawgiver by the Cretan seas,
 Who, later, judged the souls by Pluto's chair;
Of Rhadamanthus of the Cyclades;
 Sarpedon, who, self-banished, builded fair
 Miletus of far Caria,—long in dust.

THE LAMENT FOR BION

I

WAIL, all ye woodlands and ye laureled glades,
And low lament, thou azure Dorian deep!
Ye silver rivers of Sicilia, weep,
For Bion, well-beloved, hath sought the shades!
Moan, all ye groves, along your dim arcades;
Ye lowly flowers, that in sad clusters creep
Among the tangled wildwood, sink to sleep;
And as the touch of sorrow you invades,
O soft, ye roses, breathe yourselves away!
Let the drooped petals of the hyacinth sigh,
And murmur through the woods their *well-a-day*;
Let blue anemones for grief turn red;
Yea, all green things that grow, despair and die,—
For he, the dulcet Singer, now is dead!

THE LAMENT FOR BION

II

OH, all ye liquid-throated nightingales
Singing among the dusk leaves of the trees,
Pour forth your lamentable elegies
Along the twilight of Sicilian dales!
Reiterate, ye birds, your lovelorn tales!
Murmur your sorrows to the evening breeze
Where Arethusa, from across the seas,
Listens beside the fountain in your vales!
For him, who sang like you his deathless songs,
O swans Strymonian, chaunt some dolorous dirge
Immortal and melodious as his own!
Not to the Thracian Nymphs he now belongs,
For he hath passed beyond the Stygian verge,—
This Dorian Orpheus of mellifluous tone!

THE LAMENT FOR BION

III

No more at eve unto his kine he sings,—
The well-belovèd herdsman passed away;
No more beneath the oaks, at dawn of day,
One hears afar his dulcet carolings;
By Pluto's side he chaunts of other things,—
Oblivion, and the fate of mortal clay;
Ah, nevermore his gladsome roundelay
Shall sound in upland pastures by the springs!
The heifers wander by the bulls, forlorn,
With many an anxious and grief-laden low,
Nor will they touch the wealth of clover-deeps;
The mountains, too, are voiceless, eve and morn;
The flocks are silent on the silent steeps,
Listening for him who fluted long ago!

THE LAMENT FOR BION

IV

PÆAN himself lamented thy sad doom,
O Bion, master of sweet minstrelsy!
And e'en the uncouth satyrs mourned for thee;
The garden gods, amid the dittany bloom,
Wore sable stoles to semble forth their gloom;
The fountain fays beneath the ilex-tree
Rivers of tears are weeping ceaselessly,
And even Echo, grief doth now consume.
In anguish for thy fall, the orchard trees
Let drop their fruit throughout the silent vale,
And sorrow blights the beauty of the rose;
Since thou art gone dark waves the galingale,
No milk hath flowed from udders of the ewes,
Nor is there honey in the comb of bees.

THE LAMENT FOR BION

v

OH, not the swallows on the ridges high,
Nor plaintive note of piteous Philomels,
Nor dolphins rolling in the ocean swells
About the sea-banks, nor, in summer sky,
The halcyon shrilling forth her mournful cry,
Nor that strange bird of Memnon in the dells
Of dawn, e'er sang such touching, sad farewells
As were poured forth, when, Bion, thou didst die!
O all ye swallows he once gave delight,—
Taught you to twitter and almost to talk—
There as ye sit together on the bough,
Mourn low for him; ah, all ye warblers bright,
And nightingales in every bosky walk,
Bemoan yourselves he is not with you now!

THE LAMENT FOR BION

VI

Who, Bion, who would dare to be so bold
As press his lips to thy mute instrument?
Since thou art gone, who so irreverent
To try his sleight on that rare pipe of gold?
For still from thy dead mouth the tune is rolled
Along the pastoral valleys, redolent
Of thee, and with thy beauteous spirit blent,—
For there thy name is fragrant as of old.
And shall we let Pan try thy hushed pipe now
Since far thou wanderest in immortal meads?
Nay, even he, remembering, would refuse,
Lest he should touch the stops less sweet than thou!
Oh, never will the world thy warblings lose,
For Echo croons them standing 'mid her reeds.

THE LAMENT FOR BION

VII

E'EN Galatea loved thy song divine,—
The lily, who in sweet Sicilian lands
Clasped Acis, crushed to death at Cyclops' hands;—
Not on the sea-banks now doth she recline;
She hath forsaken the cerulean brine,
And sitting lonely on the lonely sands,
Seeing unherded all thy lowing bands,
She thinks on thee and keeps thy wandering kine.
Now Cypris more thy memory enjoys
Than that last kiss by Adon's wounded side;
Sadly the loves are mourning round thy tomb;
Ah, all desired gifts with thee have died,—
The blissful mouths of maidens in their bloom,
And lovely kisses from the lips of boys!

THE LAMENT FOR BION

VIII

MELES, most musical of rivers, flow,
In this thy second sorrow, to the sea;
Homer—that sweet mouth of Calliope—
Thou once didst lose; and now this newer woe,
The Herdsman's death,—thou hast to undergo;
Wail, River, wail for him unceasingly,
For nevermore from reedy pipe shall he
Flute his soft Dorian adagio!
Ah, not of wars he sang, and not of tears,
But of the shepherds and of Pan would chaunt
Amid the pasture sweeter than a bird!—
Would gather rushes in some marshy haunt,
And make the pipes that still his song endears,
Or, rising, milk the heifers of the herd.

THE LAMENT FOR BION

IX

PINDAR and Hesiod are regretted less
Than thou, O Bion, in Bœotian woods;
And not in Lesbos and her solitudes,
Alcæus and thy lovelorn poetess
Cause, by their death, such utter hopelessness.
Not for Archilochus the lone Nymph broods
Deeper in Paros by the Ægean floods;
Nor light is Mytilene's new distress.

.
Famed was Theocritus of Syracuse,
But unto Bion doth my dirge belong,
Who am no alien to the pastoral lute;
To me, when Bion died, he left his Muse—
To me, a singer of Ausonian song—
The deathless heritage of the Doric flute.

THE LAMENT FOR BION

X

AH me, when all the garden mallows fade
And drop their petals with a seeming sigh;
When beds of parsley green begin to dry,
And tendrils of the anise low are laid
Withering upon the walks, we ne'er upbraid,—
For if, when Winter comes, they seem to die,
We smile within our hearts, for by and by
Spring will remake them as the Spring has made.
But oh, we men, the mighty, and the wise,
Inheritors of splendors gone before,—
We men, when once into the earth we go,
We meet the irremediable woe;
In darksome graves we close unseeing eyes
In dreamless sleep, that waketh nevermore!

THE LAMENT FOR BION

XI

As evil men will lay a deadly bait
And kill the sweetest of the singing birds,
So, Bion, envious of thy honeyed words,
They poisoned thee because of rancorous hate.
Ah, who so basely could thy death predate?
Thee who could harm that knew thy song of herds,
Of kid and kine, of milkings and of curds?—
No music lived within the vile ingrate!
But for this deed which still my soul o'erwhelms—
Thy death by lowest among craven men—
They shall be judged by justice, whom they scorn,
And swift condemned in Rhadamanthus' realms:
But I shall never hear thy voice again
Fluting upon the hills, at eve or morn!

THE LAMENT FOR BION

XII

IF I, by my deep passion rendered bold,
Had sought the gloom of that Plutonian shore,
Like him, the famèd lion conqueror,
Or that rare lyrist of the harp of gold,
Or wise Ulysses of the days of old,—
I might, within that dark and Stygian door,
Have heard if there thou still didst sweetly pour
Thy rich Sicilian pastorals manifold.

There Dis shall drop his keys and dream of vales
He trod in Enna once, on hearing thee;
And ah, what grief will touch Persephone
When that thou pipest of her long-lost dales! . . .
But as to earth came back Eurydice,
Mayst thou return among our nightingales!

MEGARA'S LAMENT

"As a bird mourning for her nestlings dead,
Killed in the boscaje by some serpent vile,
Flutters around her little fledglings, while
Her piteous note fills all the grove o'erhead,—
But cannot bring the life back that is sped,
Yea, fears herself the reptile's fang and guile,
And wails the loss she ne'er can reconcile,
For all the comfort of her heart is fled,—
So hath this soul been harrowed—even mine;
The children so beloved—that beauteous brood—
By my dear lord were killed before these eyes,
And all the floor swam crimson with their blood.
Ah, woe is me, who childless here repine;
Now naught is left but never-ending sighs!"

BY THE GRAY SEA

WHEN all unruffled sleeps the silent sea,
 Outward I look, and love the land no more;
 Fain would my feet forever leave the shore
 To drift upon that calm serenity.
But when wild ocean thunders angrily,
 And torn waves shatter into foam, and roar,
 Then I, ill pleased, seeking the greenwood floor,
 Love the wind's harping through each swaying tree.
Ah, he whose life is passed upon the wave,
 Whose wandering bark is but a house of death,
 Toils through wild dangers to a watery grave:
Me, rather, let the forest lull to dreams,
 Low lying on some bank, the boughs beneath,
 In calm repose beside the woodland streams.

THE POWER OF LOVE

By Pisa, forth Alphèus ardent flows
Through Arcady to the Ionian brine,
Past many a shepherd piping 'neath the pine;
Deep through the emerald wave he swiftly goes
Bearing his bridal gifts of laurel and rose
And sacred soil and sprays of eglantine:
Headlong he rushes to that fountain shrine—
Fair Arethusa—with a lover's woes!
His currents, under Ocean, miles and miles
Unmingling wind, until they disembogue
In far Ortygia, fresh and sparkling free.
Ah, thus hath Love, the mischief-making rogue,
The teacher of all knavish, artful wiles,
Taught e'en a river to run beneath the sea!

SELECTIONS FROM BACCHYLIDES

HIERO'S HORSE-RACE

TO HIERO, OF SYRACUSE, WINNER OF THE RACE

I

THOU canst be judge, if any mortal may—
High-destined King of golden Syracuse—
Of honeyed music flowing from the Muse;
And now, at rest awhile from sceptred sway,
Turn hither, listen to these strains, and say
If the fair-cinctured Graces do infuse
Aught of their charm unto these words I choose,
Who come from Zea's isle to tune this lay.
And if Bacchylides—such votary I
Of golden-filleted Urania—dare
In verse that race unparalleled to sing,
Won at Olympia by thyself, O king,
Be thou the judge, as thou art just and fair,
And hear me hymn thy royal praises high!

HIERO'S HORSE-RACE

THE EAGLE

II

ALoFT, and cleaving the ethereal air
With tawny wings, far in the dazzling skies,
The Eagle of the Thunderer grandly flies
Where other glorious soarers fear to dare;
Not the cloud-piercing peaks, snow-crowned, that glare,
Nor the torn ocean that man terrifies
Balk his free plume nor daze his dauntless eyes,—
Imperious and imperial past compare!
Still onward, upward through the regions dread,
Companioned by the wind above the seas,
Mounting in splendor sweeps the king of birds:
I, too, have empyrean paths to tread,
To chaunt your praises in, and wingèd words,
O sons illustrious of Dinomenes!

HIERO'S HORSE-RACE

PHERENICUS—A HIPPOPEAN

III

CALL that man blest to whom the skies concede
A share of triumph from the multitude;
No mortal path is always flower-bestrewed,—
But happy he whom pomp and station lead:
Thy horse, O Hiero, the storm-footed steed,
The fiery Pherenicus, chestnut-hued,
Was, near Alphèus' river, early viewed
Victorious, and on haunted, Delphian mead.
Matchless he was for conquest,—failure-proof,—
For by the holy Earth I swear it true,
That, as he furious swept anear the goal,
No dust could touch him of a rival hoof;
Swift as the wingèd Aquilon he flew
Amid the shouts the nations loud uproll!

SONG FOR TWO VOICES

MEDEA TO ÆGEUS

I

"O ÆGEUS, of the soft Ionians, lord,
And king of Athens, why these notes of war?
Does the harsh trumpet of some conqueror—
Crossing the frontier vast and unexplored,
To devastate the land with fire and sword—
Sound on the air?—Some rash conspirator
Who leaves the shepherds lying in their gore
And adds their flocks, new-stolen, to his hoard?
For if not this, O King, then what alarms
Thy soul? Tell me, of Circe's line, thy friend;
For thou who art the glorious warrior-son
Of great Pandion,—thou hast men and arms,
And power supreme o'er thy dominion,
With glittering hosts thy borders to defend."

SONG FOR TWO VOICES

ÆGEUS TO MEDEA

II

"A HERALD, hurrying through the day and night,
From the extremest border brings the news
Of wondrous deeds—of him of mighty thews,
Who kills tree-bending Sinis in his might,
Slays the man-slaying Crommyon boar at sight,
Spears Sciron by the sea, and then pursues
And lets death give brute Cercyon his dues,—
Which ends the wrestling giant's cruel sleight;
Aye, strong Procrustes that in iron bed
Stretches the travelers that come anear
Until the hapless ones for mercy sue,
He conquers,—these, and more besides are dead:
What else may not this alien wonder do?
By Zeus! then think you we have naught to fear?"

SONG FOR TWO VOICES

MEDEA TO ÆGEUS

III

“BUT did the Herald give the stranger’s name?
Whence sprung? and if he brought an armèd force?
Comes he empanoplied? with myriad horse?
With clarion pealing, and with loud acclaim?
Or singly, yet with daring strength to tame
These potent ones he vanquished in his course?
Intrepid must he be,—of vast resource,
Who all alone such mighty foes o’ercame!
Or is he some bright creature of the sky
With heaven’s mission in the world to fill,—
Dispenser of the vengeance of the gods?
It must be, else, in battling, his great skill
Should at the last meet with some fearful odds
Fatal to him; this, time will verify.”

SONG FOR TWO VOICES

ÆGEUS TO MEDEA

IV

"THESE words the Herald brought: 'The warrior stands
With but two men beside him; and there gleams
A sword from shining shoulders; glittering beams
Play round twin polished javelins in his hands;
A Spartan helmet clasps his hair in bands;
He wears a purple tunic as beseems
His rank; a mantle of Thessalia streams
Across that breast high courage still commands.
Oh, youth sits thronèd in each lineament!
His eyes flash flame like some volcano's cone;
And where the battle's clangor calls afar
He plays the joyous game of crimson war;
And even now his vengeful feet are bent
For splendor-loving Athens and its throne.'"

THE DISCUS THROWER

ILLUSTRIOUS he who binds his auburn hair
With wreaths triennial. Fortune hath such boon
Granted Automedes, and newly strewn
His path with victory—the athlete fair,
Preëminent, as in the azure air
Of some cerulean-vaulted night of June
In her full glory is the orbèd moon.
The amazèd crowd pressed round at him to stare,—
The wondrous discus-hurler, true and bold,
Unmatchable in all the wrestling bouts,—
For with his brawn a nameless grace was blent;
And when the javelin through the sky he sent,
The assembled hosts of Hellas raised such shouts
As might have waked Enceladus of old!

BEFORE THE BATTLE

I

As when on darkening seas the north-wind blows
Furious and wild, and the white-crested waves
Threaten the mariners with watery graves
Who on the midnight deck unconscious doze,
Then with the opening of the Auroran rose
The south-wind bellies all the sails, and paves
The sea-paths blue around the mermaid caves
And full of hope to port the sailor goes;
So the sad Trojans, when they heard that grim
Achilles, sullen, lingered in his tent,
Bereft of sweet Briseis, yellow-haired,—
Rejoiced, and gladness through their legions went;
No longer felt they dreadful fear of him,
War's cloud was lined with light, and none despaired.

THE CONFLICT

II

THEN from the walls they rushed unto the shore,
And by the ship's stern fought anear the flood,
Where furious Hector with his victims' blood
Stained the soil dark, while all the waters bore
The tint of carnage, and both sail and oar
Were crimson splashed . . . Ah, fools, to think they could
Despoil those blue-prowed ships with havoc rude,
And on the morrow shouts victorious pour
Along the god-built streets of Ilion!
But they were counting without fate's decree,
And Nemesis and her avenging powers,—
For they were doomed, before that time, to see
With Trojan blood Scamander's waters run,
Reddened by overthrowers of their towers.

IN PRAISE OF VIRTUE

To Pheres' son these words Apollo told :

“One of two omens may thy lot assuage,—
That thou shalt die to-morrow, or thy age
Be lengthened many a year till thou be old.”

Live just and joyous; greet the cheerer, gold.

No stain the sun in all his pilgrimage
Finds in the sky; no one, though wisest sage,
Through time to youth can e'er be backward rolled.

But virtue hath a radiance all her own,

Which dims not as ephemeral deeds of man,
Nor pales as doth the fleeting star of fame;

'T is nurtured at the holy Muse's flame

And shines forever, as it still hath shone,
White as the deathless gods Olympian!

MENELAUS TO THE TROJANS

THEN Menelaus to persuade them, spake ;
"Warriors of Troy, 't is not high-ruling Zeus
That is the cause of all this world's abuse,
For men are free the paths of right to take.
Justice, chaste Order, and the Law, these make
Man blest. Ah, happy they whose children choose
These dwellers in their streets! They only lose
Who basely gain,—who faith and honor break.
And they who through contempt of equal rights
Court Arrogance and her pernicious train,—
Bestowing gifts they never truly owned,—
Though girt by flaming suns, yet walk in night's
Abysmal darkness ;—and it was her reign
That shook earth's kingdoms, and her kings dethroned!"

PEACE

O PEACE, what blessings come in thy sweet name!

Plenty from earth, and poesy from the skies;

For the immortals, thou dost bring the thighs

Of oxen and the long-wooled sheep that flame

On fiery altars; the athletic game,

The flute, the dance, and youth's festivities:

In hand-holds of the shield, the spider lies

And weaves her web; spear-points that overcame

The warrior in the battles' red retreats,

And two-edged swords, all rust, and rest from war.

No brazen clarion of the conqueror

Comes now caressing slumber to impair,

But joyous revelry doth fill the streets,

And notes of love-lays linger in the air.

SONNETS



MY CASTLE

How pale, how faint, how phantom-like it seems,
That vague and vaporous Castle, dimly bright!
From cloudy battlements burst on the sight
Innumerable valleys and unfading streams.
Inside, a golden-vaulted gallery gleams
With troops of luminous spirits, which alight
When Day drops down the drawbridge for the Night:
It is the airy castle of my dreams.
From shadowy turrets dim my soul commands
The spirit of the cloud; nightly I mark
The path of stars. Ah! no assaulting bands—
No hounds of Care swarm at the gate and bark;
And when Sleep comes, the wingèd Warden's hands
Let fall the still portcullis of the dark.

LIKE BELLS UNTOLLED

SWEET are the songs the soul still leaves unsung!

Why should the spirit strive to set in speech
The poignant love that lies beyond the reach
And utmost eloquence of human tongue
Upon the shores of Silence, heaped among
Those splendid jewels of the soul, that each
Snatches and hides forever on the beach
Of Life, from Love's great tidal-wave upflung?

O lips that smile, and eyes that shed no tears,
What veiled sorrow doth within ye dwell!

O hearts that keep a silence all your years
Though breaking with a love ye will not tell,
Your sob dies with you like an untolled bell,—
Or if at last ye speak, 't is Death who hears!

TITHONUS TO AURORA

So long ago that I forget the day,
I begged this boon of immortality
Which, granted, brought me endless agony.
Dazed by her beauty, I, in my dismay,
Forgot to ask for Youth; and here I stray
Dim-sighted, loveless, chill, and doomed to be
Agèd forever. Through eternity
Worlds may be born at will, but I must stay
Cold in these clouds, who beauteous was, and drew
Eös to love me every rosy morn. . . .
Her sandals touch the hill-tops wet with dew—
Divine she comes! . . . O Sweet, I am forlorn—
Forlorn and old—too old for love, and you!
Grant me at last to die, ere Day be born!

IN MEMORY OF AN ONLY SISTER

THAT day when thou wast in the church-yard laid
Can I forget? Thou wert so passing fair,
Thy sweet neck like the lily, and thy hair
Gold-chestnut on thy brow . . . O tender Maid,
Who would have thought thy loss could so invade
The sunshine of my years, and everywhere
Make my remembrance of thee my despair—
Thou who, alas, art but a gentle shade!
Had I but loved thee more ere thou hadst fled
Far from these fields, that timid hand of thine
Had oftener, in those twilights, lain in mine
To comfort and console! Would I had fed
Thy heart with warmer love!—now thou art dead,
Alone I drink this wormwood for my wine.

BY THE RIVER AT SUNSET

THE sting of this tarantula of toil,
The glitter of some vague Golconda's gold,
These goad us through our lives. We men have sold
Our birthright for this pottage—drudge and moil.
Not only cities now our souls embroil
In haste, but in each hamlet too, behold
The roaring wheels of hurry on are rolled,—
This writhing serpent never stops to coil.
Thou silent sun! now sinking down the dale;
Thou river fair! unrippled by an oar;
Restful yet mighty emblems ye, all hail!
Teach your repose to man for evermore,
That he upon life's lake that knows no shore
May move as peaceful as a folded sail.

THE SEA-GULL

Oh, had I but thy wings when storms arise,
Gray spirit of the sea and of the shore!
When the wild waters round thee rave and roar,
Calm art thou 'neath the tumult of the skies.
Thy plume hath spanned the deep's immensities;
Above that vast and ever-shifting floor
Thou, on thy gray wing roaming, still dost soar,
Forever drawn to where the distance lies.
From the dim sea's unknowable extreme
Thou comest, wandering through lone water-ways
To cliffs empurpled and cerulean bays;
Then, rocking near some cavern's emerald gleam,
Thou seem'st the soul of halcyonian days—
The restful Spirit of the sea supreme.

WITHIN THE GATES

A GREATER fulgence, then, mine eyes assaulted,
And in a radiance which all suns transcended,
Low down my brow before the Throne I bended;
Unworthy e'en to look upon the vaulted
Heavenly dome, much less on Him, exalted
O'er Time and Death. Slowly my vision wended
Upward; with trust and trepidation blended,
Reverent I moved, and near the Glory halted—
That Glory which was God, supreme, celestial:
No sceptre held He, but a child most holy—
A little child that beamed a look terrestrial;
And while great wings of Spirits flamed supernal,
The Seraphs sang: Ye must be pure and lowly
E'en as this babe, to gain the Life Eternal.

VOYAGERS

As happy children, in the May-time, go
To set their toy-ships on a mimic sea,
Full-sailed but rudderless, and watch with glee
The white-winged wonders driven to and fro
At the wind's will, wherever winds may blow;
Powerless to guide, recall, or make them flee;
Careless of what the unseen dangers be,—
Knowing of none—preferring not to know:
Thus we, in roseate dawns in days of yore,
Started our ships of Life to cruise the world,
Helmless, yet scorning rock and threatening gales;
What matter where those silken wings were furled?
Fond Hope forever fluttered o'er the sails
Alluring on from golden shore to shore.

MICHAEL ANGELO AT FORTY-SEVEN

NINE years!—nine years the Pope hath bade me stay
Stone-quarrying in these mountains,—kept me here
Road-making round Pietra, like a mere
Dull drudge, who, still reluctant, must obey.
I watch the sunset burn the hours away;
Visions immortal, frescoed tier on tier,
Arise before me! Sculptured forms austere
Leap into life from the imagined clay!
'T would seem the Pontiff values but my brawn;
Fettered am I within this mountain lair;
I who, with David and the Laughing Faun,
Lilied, with poësy, my Florence fair;
I who have dreams of carving Night and Dawn,
And building domes, unparalleled, in air!

ON THE UPLAND

"THERE lies great Argos!" said our mountain guide,
Pointing due eastward toward the Cyclades:
Around our feet the honey-laden bees
Hummed in the blooming thyme. Here, far and wide,
The cistus seemed a rose, while sunset-dyed
Blossomed the cliff, where drowsing at his ease
A goatherd, near the fallen marble frieze,
Dreamed of his flock along Cyllene's side.
The evening deepened and we caught the breeze
From meads of roseate oleander fair
On dusky banks of Inachus abloom;
The nightingales were mute, but everywhere
The myriad tettix, from the twilight trees
Filled, with insistent chirp, the classic gloom.

UNAVAILING GRIEF

PARAPHRASE FROM THEOCRITUS

O WHAT avails that thou shouldst weep for her
Until thine eyes with grief should flow away?
Youth is a rose which blooms but for a day
And on the morrow finds a sepulchre.
The will of Zeus what prayer of man can stir?
Unhappy Thyrsis! cease to mourn or pray,
She cannot hear thee now—thy Bloom of May—
And back from Hades comes no messenger.
The beauteous maid,—the slim and rosy girl
That round thy neck hung as a precious pearl,
Oh, what will grief subserve or bitterest tears
Since death his wolfish jaws has closed, and left
Through all thy desolate and defloured years
Not even her ashes unto thee, bereft!

A TUSCAN LACHRYMATORY

THY sweet brow low above thy lover bends—
For he is dead—thou fairest of all maids
That lived and loved in glad Etrurian glades
Where Vallombrosa now her vale extends.
To thee no comfort from the sky descends;
Thy fingers, ringed with jasper and with jades,
Clasp this small vase of sorrow. In the shades
Cold lies thy love, and so for thee all ends.
Thou weep'st, and dost endure such grief as sears
The soul. No solace for thy heart in years
To come. . . . Dead Tuscan by the Umbrian sea,
Thou who art dust this many a century,
What lover shall I leave to weep for me—
What amphora wan, filled with what woman's tears?

ON PRESENTING A SONNET

POET, whose Muse beneath the southern vine
Hath trod where fond Alpheus gently flows
To join his Arethusa where she rose
In that famed Isle of olives and of wine;
Thou who wast called by the Pierian Nine,
Who lov'st the Enna shepherd as he goes
Fluting 'mid heifers where the herds repose,
Along the valleys lost to Proserpine;
Thou who with rare Theocritus communed
In sweet Sicilian dales, far off and dim,—
Deign to accept this all unworthy lay
From one—least of the train whose harps are tuned
To Poësy—this page of Song, from him
Who loves like thee the Dorians passed away.

SUBMISSION

'T is well, stretched out beneath the yellow trees,
Deep in the hollow near the silent run,
To watch the leaves, as slowly, one by one,
Like wounded birds they flutter on the breeze.
Silence is brooding o'er the golden dale,
But from the hill-tops, ever and anon,
Muffled and faint, is heard the cruel gun
Wakening the echoes in the distant vale.
'T is well afar from town or dearest friend,
Amid these Autumn ferns alone to lie;
To feel that life is drawing to an end
E'en as the leaves that drift adown the sky;
To endure that Fate we cannot comprehend,
And, like the Year, submit, and learn to die.

ON A PAINTING

You mark at eve, far outward to the sea,
Enormous cliffs that rise and grandly loom,—
Monsters portentous of some direful doom,
Guarding the gateways to immensity.
Low down the scarlet clouds are drifting free
Where dying roses of the sunset bloom;
And voices, as of phantoms from the gloom,
Reverberate the things that are to be.
Darkness is coming from the caves of sleep
To soothe the restless breezes, and to lull
The crimson billows that unceasing roll;
And silence broods upon the purpling deep
Where, like a disembodied, wandering soul,
Wavers the pinion of the lonely gull.

A VOICE FROM THE BORDER-LAND

A MAIDEN SPEAKS

OH, bear me not where northern tempests blow
Amid the mountains of my native shore,
Where the great rivers with their thunderous roar
Dark through the pallid valleys plunging go;
But on this golden coast, where breezes low
Float from pacific seas unknown before,
Here let me breathe until my day is o'er,
Far from the land of lone Laurentian snow.
Alas, if I so young must meet my doom,
Let it be here by Esperanza's lake
Where Bernardino's ranges rise and take
The splendors of the morning, or where bloom
Of Pasadena's roses still may make
Remembered fragrance round my dying room.

THE DUSK

A GENTLE air is in the twilight sky;
The clouds are spirits, waving shadowy wings
Above the empurpled cliffs. The hour brings,
From o'er the wood, the whippoorwill's lone cry,
And voices faint, from out the gloaming, sigh;
Afar, some spirit of the belfry rings
Softly the evening bells, and silence clings
Like some loved arm around us, long laid by.
No other sound the sombre stillness mars—
All hushed as are the poplars' minarets;
The dusky cattle dozing by the bars
Seem 'gainst the sky but shadowy silhouettes;
And now, above the hills, the first few stars
Pace their steep paths and wear their coronets.

TO A NATURE STUDENT

1904

THE trivial actions of the beast and bird—
Why study these or waste on them a breath?
Matters at hand there are of life and death
To this our Country; they are veiled and slurred
By press and pulpit lest some fearless word
Should give offense. Cowards are we for pelf
Who have no freedom in our civic self
But vote like slaves, for baseness, by the herd.
Ye unsuspecting! turn your hoodwinked eyes
Upon the secret machinators of your kind,
Who, with the poniard of the purchased pen,
Stab Freedom here. Too long have you been blind!
Shall Liberty be strangled? . . . Wake! Arise!
Look round on vulpine Man, and study men!

THE EVENING VOICE

OfT have I seen o'er some gray orchard wall
The solemn cattle in the evening sun,
Awake, and slowly rising, one by one,
Hearing from home the master's welcome call,
Follow the winding pathway, great and small,
Nor wander from it till the barn was won;
Then quench each parchèd throat within the run,
And through the night sleep safe within the stall:
E'en so would I, now in this lessening light,
Hearing a voice that calls me o'er the hills,
Rise and walk onward with no fear of ills,
Threading the dim path homeward as I might,
Then, drinking deeply from immortal rills,
Rest in the folds of Peace throughout the night.

"THERE WAS A TIME"

THERE was a time when o'er my gentle books
From morn to trancèd midnight would I pore,
Enchanted by their treasured wealth of lore.
Unheeding now, with far and dreamful looks
I pass them by: enough for me the brook's
Sweet counsel, and the torrent's roar;
For Nature still allures me more and more,
And draws me daily to her sylvan nooks.
There, like a hermit, I may muse alone;
For vocal is the ground; the stars yet shine
That on the shepherds over Bethlehem shone;
The fields are volumes, and each page divine.
Few books he needs who listens at the shrine
Of Nature, and translates aright her tone.

THE EVENING HOSTS

ABOVE the battlement and parapet
The warrior squadrons of the setting Sun
Hurl in the Twilight's face their gonfalon;
From scarlet tower and from minaret,
With purple pomp and plumèd violet,
In splendid phalanxes they charge upon
The approaching legions of the Evening dun—
Those grim battalions never vanquished yet.
They storm the bastions of the wavering Day
Whose crimsoned javelins fall within that host
Unconquered; they in that unequal fray
Make of those glorious troops a holocaust:
Then from the turrets on the ramparts lost
The Twilight cohorts flaunt their flag of gray.

SICILIAN IDYL

PARAPHRASE FROM THEOCRITUS

THOU liest, Daphnis, by leaf-hidden streams,
Soft-breathing in thy poppièd slumber deep;
Thou dost not hear the tinkling of thy sheep
As far thou wanderest in the dale of dreams.
But wake, O shepherd! for it surely seems
Pan and Priapus, goat-eared twain, now leap
With satyr strides adown the rocky steep
To catch thee drowsing where thy grotto gleams.
The one with bronzed ivy-leaves is crowned
About his jocund head and caprine ears,
And both upon thy track are rushing straight;
O rouse thee, shepherd! for with frolic bound
They come, and one beside thy cavern peers,—
Arise, and flee before it is too late!

HIDDEN WOUNDS

The Heart Knoweth His Own Bitterness

AH, who shall tell of that disguised despair
Hid from the world in bitterest disdain!
The ardor damped; the new-born hope, new slain,—
Joy's bud unfolding but a rose of care!
The frailty and impermanence that dare
Mask as true love, while proving such love vain:
These daily poniards of recurrent pain—
These may be borne as we have learned to bear:—
But Oh! the life with deeper anguish fraught:
Veiled lacerations of the poet-heart—
That inward bleeding at the Triumph of Wrong!
The wounds from non-reciprocated thought—
The throbbing ache from unaccomplished Art
And ceaseless pang of ineffectual Song!

SOME PEAK OF HIGH ACHIEVE

'T is hard to be forgot, to have our name
 Fade from a world we even half despise;
And men have done gold deeds of vast emprise
 Only to be remembered, so that Fame
Might fix them in her amber. Can we blame
 Such spirits, yearning for the stars and skies,
If courting death, she them emparadise?
 Mere love—mere life, for these, were all too tame!
So, as man's night comes on, fain would he weave
 His name around some deathless star, or die
 To give it to a flower. Ah! but to leave,
Looming o'er wastes of mediocrity,
 Some peak unscalable of high achieve
 To daze the dim blue of Futurity!

MIDNIGHT BY THE CATARACT

WHIRLWIND, and Power, and Storm! The endless boom
Of unseen waters lashed to seething white,
With thundrous clarions of Niagara's might
Bellowing through vasts inscrutable of gloom:
And from the unfathomed caverns of her spume,
Enormous voices, that the mind affright—
Portents of that inevitable Night—
Whose sound is like the angel-trump of Doom:

From the dark caverns down the abysm of Time
Reverberations reach the soul,—sublime
And fateful. Then, henceforth, with fearsome breath
We list athwart the darkness, and we hear
Forever, sounding in the spirit's ear,
The roar of the insatiate scythe of Death.

STORM-SWEPT

FAIR faces calm as though from sorrow free;
The placid brows Madonna might have worn;
Clear foreheads where no cares were ever born,—
These are the gauds of Youth's vacuity.
Not so the fronts of those who life foresee;
Scarred with the thunder-track of Thought, and torn
With eagle beaks of Art, they bear the thorn
Of passion in their souls, eternally.
Behold the infinite pathos of their eyes!
Each face is as the sorrow which it knows—
Gashed as the shield of Hector, but with blows
Immortal of the mind, that agonize.
And if e'er peace her seal to such bestows,
'T will be in Lethe where no thoughts arise.

THE BEAST

DEEP in the earth's most fathomless profound,
In darksome caverns where there comes no light,
I heard a monster crawling through the night,
And, as it neared, its roaring shook the ground.
A Shape invisible, it glared around;
Only its eyes I saw—a baleful sight—
Green-blazing balls of terror and of might;—
Formless the horror came—a moving sound.
Then, when I thought the Beast would strike me dead,
Prone in the dark I fell, and trembling, prayed;
Whereat, descending from the walls above—
While splendor filled the cave from overhead—
In dazzling beauty to my eyes displayed,
Appeared the white wings of the sacred Dove.

THE DYING DAY

WHAT is thy trouble, Day, in that thine eyes
Are weighted with the beauty of despair?—
That all the illusive glory of thy hair,
Like a fond hope fallacious, fades and dies?
Stabbed by the spear of empty prophecies,
Become the burthens, then, too hard to bear?
Or does the thought of realms thou must forswear
Flood thee, at eve, with these melodious sighs?
Or dost thou feel the intolerable weight—
The iron crown of hours upon thy head?—
And, sadly glad,—as we at evening's gate,—
Smile in thy heart that thou shalt soon be dead,
Because the splendors of an earlier state
And Dreams auroran now are vanished?

FAME

WHAT does it profit, all the praise of men,
When these our ears are filled with silent dust?
What solace in the monumental bust
Which never more can reach our distant ken?
Better to let the fluent brush and pen
Drop from the hand into corrosive rust
Than feel this feverish and ignoble lust
For mere men's praises, never heard again.
And I, in youth,—oft being much to blame,
Listening the trump the inglorious goddess blows—
Beguiled by empty blare and loud acclaim—
Spake rashly then, but now as one who knows,—
That he who lets Love pass to clutch at Fame,
Gathers but ashes for life's fairest rose.

THE HEIGHTS

STILL is Prometheus with his anguish fraught,
And each aspiring soul Thought's vulture-beak
Yet feels, defiant, and will not be meek—
For peace with genius never need be sought.
'T is only in achieving, life is wrought.
Fame's clarion peals above the highest peak,
And the Icarian mind will ever seek
The starry upland of creative thought.
O. empyrean Youth! who soared away
Up to the sun with thy fresh pinions free,
Then lost thy wings, and for a night and day
Fell headlong, sheer, within the abysmal sea,—
Far greater thou, than Dædalus wise and gray,
Who, soaring lower, lived ingloriously!

DEAR ARE THESE FIELDS

TO MY BROTHER H.

WHEN by the fence-row blooms the golden-rod,
When days are dreamy, tempting one to ease,
I leave my house—a wren's nest in the trees—
And pace the dear fields I so oft have trod.
Here my impassioned father walked the sod
And flung Shakespearian numbers down the breeze
While slow we strolled, as brothers. Joys like these
Are mine no more, since him the folds of God
Long claim. And now alone I softly tread,
Musing, within these glades, and find repose.
And when at evening pales the western rose,
I oft recall the sounding phrases read,
As he, enraptured, dwelt on some fine close
Timonian,—ah, I hear each word he said!

DELPHIS REMEMBERS SIMÆTHA

WHY do I seal these lips and never sing
Of love, who might so many a time have sung?
Ah! passionate lips from mine own lips have wrung
Love ere it reached to song! How could I fling
Love into verse whose poignant aspic sting
Silenced all voice? Love to these lips has clung
So fiery close, speech could not find among
Her burning words one word whose eagle wing
Could reach the cloud we soared in—she and I!
She would not hear my song; and on my mouth
Laid her hot hand, and like the parchèd south
Hungred for rain. O Love! though I should die,
What could I do but water such a drouth?
I was made mute by Love's own ecstasy.

IN A VINEYARD OF ASTI

ITALY

O NYMPH of cheer that lurks within the vine,
You shall not so elude me as you think!
Eyes shall be bright for you, and cheeks be pink,
Though cool in clusters lurking, you recline.
On cheese of Parma some day we shall dine,
Faunian enough to make the Cyclops blink.
O sprite of Asti! there shall be the clink
Of fluted glasses foamed with golden wine:
Some eve upon the Corso, down at Rome,
Giulio and I shall find you, bottled trim,
And, sipping softly, hear the hissing foam
Of rising bubbles bursting round the rim,
Then walk up to the Pincio for a whim,
And watch the sunset glorify the Dome.

THE LURID CASTLE

PERCHED on the perilous crag, the Castle vast
Rose o'er the abysmal gulph—a fearsome sight!
Against the ebon of the starless night
The turrets glowed vermilion, overcast
By some unearthly flame. A bugle blast
Blared from the bannered walls. Through casements bright
Were seen the moving revelers, gay bedight,
As to the towers I turned mine eyes aghast:
For lo! the Castle wavered, as a shock
Trembled along the undulating floor
Where Knights and Ladies passed in brilliant show,
Then, like a maniac from his dizzy rock,
The lurid horror, swaying to and fro,
Plunged headlong down the chasm with deafening roar!

WITH A GREEK HERDSMAN

STILL doth the shepherd on the mountain-chain
Follow his flock along the thymy hills
Of Arachova, where the foamy rills
Carol their music to the Delphian plain.
As from some jutting bluff where he hath lain
Prone with his herd among the daffodils,
Seaward he stares, the nightingale's rich trills
Greet him with rapture of a wild refrain.
Behind him stand the twin Phædriades
That in the blue of Hellas shadowy soar;
Sleeps to the south the far Corinthian bay,
And dimly looms, adown the western way,
The Acarnanian and Ætolian shore
Past capes of Elis to the Ionian seas.

STILL THOU THE TEMPEST

THE sun upon the Galilean lake
Was setting red as though in sullen mood;
And Christ, aweary with the multitude,
Doing good works all day for pity's sake,
Entered the ship and slept. A storm made quake
The deep, and howling, thundered with its flood;
But He, rebuking, stilled it where He stood—
And winds were hushed where erst the tempest brake:

O gentle Pilot! when those waves of ill
Come roaring round me; and when tempest-tossed;
When doubt's black winds rise near me and are shrill;
When I am sinking, and am almost lost,
Arise from out Thy sleep, my hope fulfill,
And to the surging storm say, Peace, be still!

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

IN MEMORIAM, 1892

No more our Nightingale shall sing his lay;
The groves are mute, for he has taken flight;
He whose mellifluous voice was our delight
Has, by his death, brought sorrow and dismay.
There is a beauty gone from out the day;
There is a planet fallen from the night;
A splendor is withdrawn from out our sight,
A glory now for ever passed away.
A thousand hearts unused to bleed have bled,
And drops of pity dim the hard world's eye;
And oh, what memories of the day-spring fled!
What vanished hopes,—what first love's ecstasy!
Ah, we have lost what time can ne'er supply,
For now the Poet of our Youth is dead!

THE PSALM

TIER upon tier of seraphim, bedight
With most exceeding glory, not alone
In golden voids of Heaven, but near the throne,
Triumphant, with effulgent wings upright;
Peal upon peal of song, that took its flight
O'er walls of sardonyx and jasper stone,
Of such enrapturing sweetness as was known
Never to me who came from earth's dark night:
So did they sing; so ever did they choir;
Yet I who listened still am found unmeet
One strain of that wild rapture to repeat,
Though all of Heaven seemed turned into one lyre:
Prostrate I fell before their burning feet—
Prostrate before their flaming wings of fire.

THE HELPERS

Not unto him who through inglorious days
Reaches, at last, his ignominious goal—
Material wealth; nor him, whose shriveled soul,
Raised to scorned eminence by devious ways
Exults in power for which his honor pays;
Nor Conqueror, dealing universal dole,—
Though blatant Fame his brutal acts enroll,—
To none of these the laurel and the praise;
But unto them, true helpers of their kind,
Who, daily walking by imagined streams,
Rear fanes empyreal in Verse of gold,—
Rare architects of figments and of dreams,
Who, from the plastic and creative mind
Build their fine nothings in immortal mold.

IN QUIET FIELDS

ONE lies and dreams; there is no dissonance
In all the slumbering air; and e'en the heat—
The summer-colt that shimmers o'er the wheat—
Is still; the dells are dim with vague romance;
Sweet echo is disconsolate—no chance
Has she to-day the traveler to cheat,
For down is on the sandals of all feet,
And softly sighs the wind as if in trance.
Far in her golden fields of calm repose,
Deep bathed within the amber afternoon,
Hangs the pale remnant of the mid-day moon;
And Day's sweet flower—that at the evening close
Folds like a bud to open as a rose—
Fades with the fading of this day of June.

WITHDRAW, O WORLD

RECEDE! recede! all literal things that are!
Welcome the voice that is not, but that seems!
Ye rapt illusions and resplendent gleams,
Drift out of darkness hither from afar!
Aërial ministers! your gates unbar
And give me glimpses of eternal streams;
Take all that is, but leave me all my dreams—
Rapt visions thronging through the gates ajar!
Recede, O World! and let the mysteries
Sweep in upon me of the Spirit's birth;
Oh, come, ethereal unrealities,
Flood me and fill me beyond reach of dearth
With those immortal murmurs not of earth,—
Memnonian music sweeter than the sea's!

“WILL THESE FADE TOO?”

O SORROW, sorrow, leave me now alone!

I hear the noiseless foot-falls of the dead
In all the paths; and in the blue o'erhead
I feel the yearning faces of my own.

There is each day a melancholy tone
Tolled from the cloudy towers of sunset red.
I know the wings of morning vanishèd,
And in the child's laugh hear my manhood's moan.

Oh, daily losses gathering to a pain,
Something is gone that will not come again!
Where is the glory fled?—where are the gleams—
The recreant Dawn's incomparable beams? . . .
Faded and flown! . . . Will these fade too, and wane—
These last delusions and desired dreams?

ST. PAUL'S SHIPWRECK

THERE under Crete soft were the skies and blue;
Sudden the troubled heavens turned to dun,
The tempest, from swart deserts Nubian,
Raged with its furies; famished were the crew;
Two sennights, dreadful, wandering, drave we through
Terrific roarings of Euroclydon;
The sky a wall of brass, no stars, no sun,
Where o'er us ever shrieked the lost sea-mew;
Sharp spears of jagged rock rose 'mid that roar
Black in the foam of breakers; it was land
Death-dealing, where the storm hurled us, and tore
The ship atwain; we, dashed upon the sand,
By God's grace saved, lay on Mileta's shore—
There where that beast, unvenomed, fanged my hand.

"I STAND UPON THE BASTIONS"

I STAND upon the bastions of the day;
The troublous Dawn is laboring in the skies;
Vast shapes and vague, portentous effigies,
Stalk in the clouds and threaten,—yet men say
That we are safe . . . Yes! Safe as once were they
Feasting in Babylon when Cyrus' wiles
Drew off Euphrates, and let in his files—
His myrmidons to slaughter and dismay!
Safe—say ye? Listen! Hear ye not the sound
Of stealthy sappers tunneling 'neath the walls?—
That ominous rumble heard below the ground
When muffled millions dig—no shout—no calls,
But dark and secret workings all around—
Safe? . . . Safe! Why wait ye till the Castle falls!

HE MADE THE STARS ALSO

VAST hollow voids, beyond the utmost reach
Of suns, their legions trembling at His rod,
Died into day hearing the voice of God;
And seas new-made, immense and furious, each
Plunged and rolled forward feeling for a beach;
He walked the waters with effulgence shod.
Then, this world made, He yearned for worlds to make
From other chaos out beyond our night,—
For to create is still God's prime delight.
The large moon, all alone, sailed her dark lake,
And the first tides were moving to her might;
Then darkness trembled, and began to quake
Big with the birth of stars, and when He spake
A million worlds leapt radiant into light!

IN TWILIGHT REEDS

ABOUT the hour the vivid sunset makes
The beauteous river's long unrippled blue
Turn to more sumptuous and refulgent hue,
Reflecting all its clouds and scarlet flakes;
And when no wind the reedy inlet shakes,
When all is quiet as the falling dew,
The fisher, drifting in his still canoe,
Floats noiselessly upon these little lakes.
In twittering flocks, where rushes rise and shoot
Their spears above the shallows, golden-clear,
The marsh-birds settle down and have no fear. . .
So silent is the air, so hushed, so mute,
That e'en the sentinel heron does not hear,
But stands erect, nor drops his lifted foot.

THE FIRST AWAKENING

FAR off I saw the seraph wings upraised
In flame; with fulgence more than light the air
Burned, and the glory showed that God was there
Ineffable. Slowly mine eyes undazed,
As one, bearing a lily, unamazed
Called me by name; and I was then aware
That love within me grew a flower of prayer—
My spirit began to know her as I gazed:
She led me by still waters, even those
Foretold, and I was filled with peace, and knew
My troublous soul was entering Paradise:
Then memory bloomed, a slowly-opening rose,
And while I asked if Heaven indeed were true,
Her look of love answered from long-lost eyes!

ANTONY TO CLEOPATRA

AFTER THE BATTLE AT SEA

HATH this mine arm lost valor, and mine eye
Its penetrant power? And will no smile
Leap to thy lips, my Lotus of the Nile,
To greet my coming, now that victory
Sits on the helmets of our enemy?
Who nobly die must nobly live the while;—
Ah! there I lapsed through love, but not through guile—
And now portentous phantoms fill the sky.

The day is past—defeat, and all its ills. . . .
Oh, let me lean this head upon thy breast,
As on the gentle shoulder of the hills
The gray and fading clouds of evening rest—
Vanquished, my Queen! not by War's plumèd crest,
But by thy conquering kisses' fatal thrills!

AN OLD ANCHOR ON THE COAST

BROKEN, I rust beside this Northern roar
 'Mid rocks of desolation and of doom—
I who once dropped through waters filled with bloom
 Of lotus-lilies where flamingoes soar
In coves of El Dorado. I no more
 Shall dip in green sea-beds of glimmering gloom,
 Nor hear the warm white-crested breakers boom
 Far on the stretches of the palmy shore!
Ah! ne'er again shall these corroded hands
 Grapple the branchèd coral 'neath the waves
 To hold the good ship safe against the breeze,
Nor wake the Mermaid, dreaming in her caves
 On ocean ledges floored with fabulous sands
 Deep in the dim unfathomable seas!

HE BUILDS THE CITY OF ENOCH

YEARLY I till the vale and sow the seed,
But in the furrow rots the golden grain;
My labor is accursed, and all in vain,—
The very earth revolting at my deed.
God saith no man shall slay me, though I plead
Daily for death. He placed this scarlet stain
Here on my brow, and agonizing pain
Gnaws me beneath it, yet He gives no heed.
Enoch reproacheth me, the guileless lad,
With eyes too like that other—long since dead.
Remorse engulfs me in her sanguine flood;
I build this City, else I should go mad;
But, as I work, the frowning walls turn red,
And all the towers drip crimson with *his* blood.

THE OCEAN ISLE

Its cliffs are peaks,—ten thousand feet on high,
Sheer from the sea, they tower above the mist;
Each sunrise smites them gold and amethyst;
And there the noon clouds pause as they go by.
It looms a vision of the wave and sky.
From upland valleys which the dawn has kissed,
Vague waterfalls come streaming where they list,
And lose themselves in falling, dreamily.
Unutterably blue and dim, it seems
Some region rising from the sea serene.
Across the years the phantom waves of green
Boom at its base above the petrel-screams;
But by none else hath it been ever seen—
Only by me—and only in my dreams!

THE GRASSHOPPER TO AURORA

TITHONUS SPEAKS

O DAWN! was this my punishment condign?
How long it is since thou upon me beamed!
That thou wouldst change me thus I never dreamed,
Who am become a voice, and here repine
Unknown to all, except to thee, divine.
Rechange!—restore me to thyself, though seamed
With eld, to see thy chariot, radiant-teamed,
Come up the slopes of morning from the brine!
Let me return to thee though I be old!
Without thee, O Belovèd! here I pine
Ages within the grass. 'T is I,—behold!
Who had a body beauteous e'en as thine;
Lift me above; and thou once more be mine
Far in the bosom of thy clouds of gold!

FAR FROM THE CROWD

THE upland winds are blowing loud and shrill;
Above this hollow lone, I hear them rave
'Mong autumn grasses o'er the summer's grave;
The silent cypresses that fringe the hill
Bend 'neath the fury of their angry will;
While here, this limpid pool beside the cave
Lies all unruffled by the wind or wave,
And holds the blue of heaven calm and still:

Then let her trump blare round them on their peak,
They who by blatant Fame enthronèd are;
But I will make my soul a pool, and seek
The sheltering silence of the hills afar;
Then through the days it may of heaven speak,
And through the nights, perchance, reflect a star.

LETHE

THE angel takes my hand and downward leads
Through those dim regions where Oblivion lies.
Upon the lava-rock that vitrifies
Around us there, no flowers grow, nor weeds.
Sole on her throne sits Darkness grim, and breeds.
Each cliff with cliff in solemn blackness vies;
No voices from that midnight gloom arise;
Slowly the inky river flows and feeds.
The angel with me stops, and from the brink—
Amid that troop of gray shades on the shore
Who pace for ages—bids me stoop and drink.
I do his hest, and mark him upward soar;
Then memory, with that draught, begins to shrink,
And I remember—ah! . . . no more . . . no . . . more.

THE DAYBREAK

THE Dawn has come! with soft harmonious sound
Turn on your hinge each adamantine gate!
Crumble, ye barriers! be exterminate
All ye impenetrable doors profound
That bar the way to knowledge! let redound
The pæan, and to Man capitulate!
To him ope your Cimmerian portal straight,
Ye Powers of Darkness that our souls confound!
Young is the World, and man has just begun
To touch those havens of the unfathomed sea
That lie enshrouded dark in mystery
In that remote, unguessed, and dim region
Beyond auroral reaches of the sun:
This is the daybreak of the Day to be!

A PASSING SHIP

How beauteous with her canvas to the breeze,
As slow she bends and rocks above the bay!
She will not come anear us; she will stray
Onward within the West. Mark how she flees
Along the sunset splendor of the seas!
Comes she from silken Fez or dusk Cathay,
With scents of sandal-wood that round her play
In all her wings? Or bears she fragrant teas,
And pungent rolls of Ceylon's cinnamon? . . .
She sails . . . and sails! But whither will she steer?
It seems to one who waits, that far from here,
Between the crimson gateways she will run,
Deep down those glowing portals, golden-clear,
And cast her anchors in the flaming sun.

AT THE POINT OF DEATH

TO THE SPIRIT OF POESY

COME nearer, my Belovèd, it is night;
Bend down above my bed thy features mild;
No wife have I to love, nor tender child—
Thou wert my angel,—wilt thou take thy flight—
Thou! with thine eyes of pity infinite—
And leave me dying and unreconciled?
It was the sweetness of thy lips beguiled
Life of its pang and made the darkness bright:
Oh, lean down nearer—nearer—do not fly—
Have we not loved each other well and long?
Leave me not now, my heart—my soul—my song—
Belovèd Poësy! to thee I cry,
Wrap thy dear arms around me—hold me strong—
Oh, wake me with thy kisses when I die!

DISILLUSIONED

WHERE have the power and the splendor flown?
Where have the promises of morning sped?
Ambition where?—her gonfalon outspread
Flaunting the spacious sky of youth alone;
Making the neck of circumstance a stone
Whereon to mount, with high and haughty tread,
Up the sheer steep to her imperial throne.
Those starry aspirations—are they dead?
Were they but as a phantom, then, that loomed
Across the desert of our days, unknown,
Uncomprehended? and have they consumed
The pith of youth for naught? Will these atone—
These hopes deferred—for visions long entombed?
And is this all that life can give—a moan?

ABOVE THE ABYSM

ON either side huge beetling peaks rose sheer,
And blackness filled the gorge for evermore;
Up from the yawning chasm the cataract's roar
Thundered aloud from cliff to cliff austere.
Across the abysm, as thin as gossamer,
Was stretched a cord from perilous shore to shore;
To this a man clung where no bird could soar,
While low the thin thread sagged, his weight to bear.
In that unfooted region who could aid? . . .
Across the darkness there I heard no cry,
But still his vague form, dimly could espy
Where, with tense hands, he held, and swayed, and swayed;
I sickened at the sight, and for him prayed;
Nor knew, until he fell, the man was I.

THE EVENING HOUR

STILL doth Apollo down the scarlet ways
Of sunset glory charioteer his team,
Where the long lessening lanes of crimson gleam
Athwart the solemn rifts of gathering grays.
Within a molten waste of chrysoprase
Dim, temporal domes arise as in a dream;
While toward the zenith, over all supreme,
Torn shreds of splendor float within the blaze.
Dark grow the islands, as the sinking beam
Deserts each crag and sombre-wooded scar;
From o'er the empurpled gravel of the bar,
Faint to us comes the lonely bittern's scream;
While on the darkening mirror of the stream
Falls the effulgence of the evening star.

THE QUESTION

With folded wings we paced the gorge alone,
The shining nimbus round the angel there
Lighted my feet. Black in the zenith air
Rose the immeasurable mountain throne,
Peak above peak of everlasting stone:—

“What is Eternity? O Guide, declare!”

“Conceive,” said he, “an angel flying where
Rises aloft yon peak’s Cimmerian cone,
And that his pinion’s soft extremity
Should brush those walls of adamant, and wear
One grain away; then, every thousandth year
Again his wing should touch it, flying by,
Till all the cliff, at last, should disappear—
Then only would begin Eternity!”

TO THE POPPY

ELUSIVE Spirit of the vague inane

Whose keys unlock the cavernous doors of sleep,

Profound and dim, unfathomably deep,—

Thou, with the soft links of thy noiseless chain,
Dost bind the frenzied body and the brain!

Soother of anguish for all men that weep!

Angel of mercy! thou dost from them keep

The pangs of torture—the wild throes of pain.

Strange lights thou bringest far beyond the gleams

Of beacons on the peaks of thought, while all

About thy feet move those unending streams

And labyrinthine by-ways past recall;

And 'twixt two worlds, 't is thou that canst let fall

The cloudy drawbridge of dædalian dreams.

IN THE METROPOLIS

I LIKE not with the City's human stream
To be rushed onward, nor to hear the groan
Of restless, hurrying masses, avarice-blown
Along the streets, with trade their only theme:
How can the sylvan poet dream his dream
Amid the raging Babel round him thrown,—
Canyons of brick paved with reverberate stone,
The whirl of traffic, and the shriek of steam?

But oh, far off from all the noise of these,
To pace the shores that to the soul belong,
In realms reclusive past the thought of care;—
By the lone foam of sanctuary seas
To hear drift on, in deeps of sunset air,
The phantom caravels of deathless Song!

THE VOICELESS

He clomb where dreamers ever strive to climb;
Not at life's low unsatisfying lake
He sought a deep, insatiate thirst to slake,
But with unalterable faith sublime
He scaled the cliffs of midnight and the prime,
Gnawed by the vultures of his thought, nor spake
One word, mute-waiting for some Power to break
The torturing taciturnity of Time.
Stern with the soul's unconquerable will,
He stood, and trembled with ecstatic thrill,
While through the darkness gleamed his pallid face;
Uplooking to the stars, he listened still
For some apocalyptic Voice to fill
The Vasts of unimaginable space.

BELOVED DALES

THOSE words believe not, for they were not true,
That lauding other lands disparaged mine.
If I have sung the olive and the pine;
If still from half-closed eyelids looking through
I dreamed of Capri, dimly vague and blue;—
If I have praised the castles of the Rhine,
Or Dorian inlets of the Ægean brine;
I have not therefore lost my love for you,
O river islands that in clusters lie
As beautiful as clouds! ye are my own!
Belovèd dales, and crags that touch the sky,
The tendrils of my heart for years have grown
Around you all,—ye cannot be o'erthrown,—
Ye hold my heart, and shall until I die!

“THE HARVEST WAITS”

GOD hath been patient long. In æons past
He plowed the waste of Chaos. He hath sown
The furrows with His worlds, and from His throne
Showered, like grain, planets upon the Vast.
What meed of glory hath He from the past?
Shall He not reap, who hears but prayer and groan?
The harvest waits. . . . He cometh to His own,—
He who shall scythe the starry host at last.
When the accumulated swarms of Death
Glut the rank worlds as rills are choked by leaves,
Then shall God flail the million orbs, as sheaves
Unfruitful gleaned; and, in His age sublime,
Winnow the gathered stars, and with a breath
Whirl the spurned chaff adown the void of Time!

SUNSET IN HELLAS

How many an eve, on yonder peak at rest,
I watched the shadowy pageant of the sky,—
The fading hosts in plume and panoply
Pass, on the cloudy ramparts of the West!
Huge Titans, hurling towers from the crest
Of serried bastions that embattled lie;
And phantom galleons, slowly drifting by
'Mid amber seas, to havens of the blest!
Islands of desolate gold; cities august
Empinnacled on the verge of scarlet deeps—
Dim, rose-flushed heights, crowned with aularian fanes,
Slow crumbling into wastes of ruby dust;
And plunging slowly down the crimson steeps,
The Horses of the Sun, with flaring manes!

AN OLD VENETIAN WINEGLASS ROSE-
COLORED AT THE BRIM

DAUGHTER of Venice, fairer than the moon!
From thy dark casement leaning, half divine,
And to the lutes of love that low repine
Across the midnight of the hushed lagoon,
Listening with languor in a dreamful swoon—
On such a night as this thou didst entwine
Thy lily fingers round this glass of wine,—
Didst clasp thy climbing lover—none too soon!
Thy lover left, but ere he left thy room
From this he drank, his warm lips at the brim;
Thou kissed it as he vanished in the gloom;
That kiss, because of thy true love for him—
Long, long ago when thou wast in thy bloom—
Hath left it ever rosy round the rim!

THE VISION

ONE side the beetling ridge of heated stone

The fiery chasm lay, with flaming seas

And tongues of fire, and awful agonies ;

While many a sob, and many a hopeless groan

Rose wild around me as I stood alone. . . .

I looked above, and under summer trees

Saw troops of spirits strolling at their ease,

Who, ever harping, knew nor grief nor moan,

But filled the rosy air with ecstasies

Of song. "And who are those that never cease

To sing? who they that by the flames are blown?"

"Those are the spirits who have championed Peace ;

The souls that gloried in red War are these.

Lo, God is just—they reap as they have sown!"

UNSOLACED

AN AUGUST THRENE

THE plowman slowly down the furrow goes;
The harvest fields are of their fullness shorn;
The standing squadrons of the tasseled corn
Turn goldener each day in golden rows.
The yellow peach within the orchard grows
Encrimsoned toward the sun; and faintly borne
O'er dale and dell, fond fancy hears the horn
September from her phantom hill-side blows.
Yet in the heart the fragrance of the rose—
The summer's rose—lingers with eloquence;
Nor can the autumn's rare magnificence,
Nor her soft voices and adagios—
For rapture gone—bring balm of recompense,
Or soothe the sadness that the soul o'erflows.

THE GLOAMING

TO M. J. M.

THE tree-tops tremble with the gentle air;
Cool as a sister's fingers on my brow
I feel the fondling of the zephyr now,
As if some delicate spirit touched my hair.
The wings of twilight, opening darkly fair,
Shed round their velvet glamour, and the glow,
Pale on the western pyre, is burning low;
Hush! for the Day is kneeling down in prayer.
Her life is o'er, and she is moving on
Into the shadowy caverns of the Vast;
Into the hollows void of moon or sun,
Down to the dim irrevocable Past;
Yet shall she thread those doors, nor look aghast—
She walked in light until her race was run.

THE BOUQUET

As one in late November 'mid low meads
Tramps to far fields upon the upland set,
And on some fence as on a parapet
Leans, and looks in on briery wastes, where feeds
The snow-bird, lonely, on the gray grass-seeds—
While round, the wraiths of April's violet
And ghosts of pale rath roses bring regret—
Then rambles in among those sombre weeds
By bloomless stalks of many a late wood-rose,
And gleans from them one handful of wild things
That, when at home, some recollection brings
Of sweet dead days: so may he find who goes
Through uplands of my Song—where no flower blows—
Some faint suggestion of far fairer Springs!

SANCTUARY

WHERE shall I make my grave my soul to please?
In sultry wastes where silent Arabs tread?
Upon the brow of some stark mountain head?
Or in the lone, illimitable seas?
Beneath the umbrage of ancestral trees
Where I have laughed with loved ones who are dead?
Or on the blue hills where my youth was sped?
Oh, yield me yet some wilder spot than these!
Place me at last, when my brief day is o'er,
And life's faint lamp burns out within my room,—
Place me on high above the Cataract's shore
Amid the mist, the sunshine, and the gloom,
That I may hear, in that unending roar,
The thunder of God's presence round my tomb!

CONQUEST

1900

THE thievery of the Nations, falsely great,
Goes ever on regardless of Thy laws:
E'en yet our Christian England's lion paws
Reek with the blood of India, and of late
Afric hath bled. The Tzar, at China's gate,
Thunders for empire; and *our* crimsoned claws
Clutch for more spoils,—immeasurable maws
For ever ravenous and insatiate!
O God,—the God of millions who are weak
No less than of the nations that are strong,—
Wilt *Thou* not aid the imperiled, and so wreak
Vengeance upon these robbers? For this wrong
Chide them as Thou didst Saul—in lightnings speak
Thy fiery wrath! . . . How long, O Lord, how long?

AT EVENTIDE

As one at twilight, silent and alone,
Pacing through some secluded garden-close,
Notes the ungathered blooms, and sadly knows
How all neglect their fragrance, and disown;
Sees the parterre with crimson beauty strown,
And, where the nodding scarlet deepest glows,
Only the wind's hand take the bending rose,
Where, on unfooted walks, the leaves are blown:

So, wandering through the garden of my lays,
Now, when the gathering shadows deeper fall
On lonely paths of unfrequented Song,
I see my roses undesired of all;
They bloom and fade unnoticed by the throng,
To drift, ungarnered, down untrodden ways.

THE POET

THROUGH beds of asphodel he moves along
To amaranthine meadows of the prime;
He is in love with hope, and longs, in time,
To add one bead more of denouncement strong
Unto the rosary 'gainst all human wrong;
He hopes beside—so high his wishes climb—
To leave, in the wild garden of his rhyme,
Some marvelous lily of immortal song.
And still he gives full freely of his store,
Walking this world as one entrancedly;
And in life's turbid wave, for evermore,
Drops the crown-jewel of his melody,
As one who from some cliff upon the shore
Lets fall, unseen, a ruby to the sea.

FROM THE PROMONTORY

I WATCHED for daybreak: . . . To the templed height
The wind-borne murmur of the Ægean sea
Surged in full anthem. The sublimity
Of the profound unfathomable Night
Waned, as the regal planets took their flight
On fading wings. Full softly, floating by,
Low vapors lifted and revealed the sky
Pallid with dreams of the auroral light.
A tremulous opalescence lit the gloom
Wherein the dim and folded flower of day,
Like some sweet rose reluctant still to bloom,
Paled at the thought of opening. Darkness ceased,
And spectral rifts of faint refulgent gray
Lilied the airy meadows of the East.

THE REST AT NOON

A PAINTING BY GEORGE MORLAND IN THE AUTHOR'S HOME

THERE is no sound nor rustle of a breeze
Above the bank wherefrom the hawthorn dips;
As the gray horse, plow-weary, gently sips,
The brook-rings widen by the bending trees.
Low voices of the tired laborers cease,
While Slumber, with hushed finger on her lips,
Touches their eyes, and by that sweet eclipse
Leads them through valleys of unending ease.
I pass within the picture, noiselessly,
Down the green lanes of Devon, where they rest;
Their lids are heavy; sultry is the day,
And in their dreams, at least, they may be blest;
Breathe not a whisper—hush! and steal away,—
As Morland saw them, still so let them be.

THE THORNY PATH BELOVED

THE cup he quaffed was of ethereal wine :
Though Wealth, the golden, entered not his door,
He could have droned an idler, yet forbore
The lure of Ease upon her couch supine.
His heart's volition led him to incline
To ardent toil ; with brain and hand to explore
The realm of art, which like a phantom shore,
Enticed him on to her elusive shrine.
Now evening falls : Health, Riches, Honor, Fame,—
These passed and left him ; yet he trod the ways
Appointed by his soul, nor ever furred
The spirit's banner for a lower aim :
Ideal-led, he lived ecstatic days,
Spurning, with wingèd feet, the sordid World.

TO BRIZO

DROWSY thou liest on thy popped bed,
Inamorata of the realms of air!
Goddess or queen or spirit, passing fair,
Rise from thy slumberous pillow where is spread
In lustrous darkness round thy starry head
The wondrous wealth of thine entrancing hair;
Still whisper to me from thy dusky lair
Or Atropos shall cut the silver thread!
Clear source and fountain of my fleeting lays,
Angel of peace, and saint that comforteth,
Thy lips were on my mouth—I drew thy breath—
Thine arms enwapt me through thy shadowy ways—
O thou divine consoler of my days,
Be near me in the darkness after death!

DECEMBER

THE snow lies white upon the frozen plain,
And loudly blows the hyperborean blast;
His cohorts, armed with lances of the rain,
Tilt fierce against me and go charging past.
The darling Summer that we loved in vain,
Oh, where is she and all her gold of yore?
Far, far the naiad of the brook has flown,—
Her reeds are tuneless on the icy shore;
Gleams from the wood, white as Carrara's stone,
The Dorian column of the sycamore;
O'er barren hill-tops girt with windy trees
The songless thickets make their chilly moan;
And on the high crags where the wan snows freeze,
The gaunt gray Winter mounts his stormy throne.

AN IDYL

Not in these valleys where we now recline,
But far beyond the purple peaks aglow,
Lies the fair land I love. The winds are low
And soft. He of the thyrsus and the vine
Comes with his leopards and his skins of wine ;
Glimpses there are of Naiads to and fro
Flitting through groves ; and faint is heard and slow
The pipe of some brown Faun beneath the pine.
There upland streams, dissolving, reach the vales ;
And there are groves of ilex and of yew,
Unending valleys and Illyrian dales,
And gods reclining where the soft winds woo ;
And azure seas there are, and sunset sails,
And shepherds piping on the capes of blue.

THE SINGER

I LISTENED once, upon an Autumn day,
Unto a warbler in a golden wood;
As I, entrancèd by the music, stood,
Unequalled seemed to me his wondrous lay.
Then as I thought of all the choir of May,—
Ecstatic notes in every solitude,—
So changed by that remembrance was my mood,
That, disenthralled, I sadly turned away:

O Poet, chanting in these waning times,
Far from the fair Elizabethan Spring,—
Outpouring here reiterated rhymes,—
How full of pathos is thy sadder fate
Who by the spirit art impelled to sing,
Yet conscious that thy voice is heard too late!

THE EVENING BREEZE

THE light is waning, and the gentle air
Touches the shallow pools along the shore
Not roughly, but as if it still forbore
To spoil that mirrored surface sleeping fair.
The water-lilies seem to have no care,
But dream on in the silence; and the oar
Sleeps in the shadow by the sycamore.
I feel the zephyr's breath that here and there
Bends the poised arrow-heads, and interlocks,
Gently, their barbs; and on the maple shows
The under silver of the leaves, and goes
Landward so faintly, that the twittering flocks
Of small birds settling down upon the rocks
Cease, in the dusk, their soft adagios.

MORS VICTRIX

At last had come the time long prophesied—
The world was frozen; ice now ruled again.
Dead lay the earth's last man. Feeling Death's reign
Was o'er, Life, though dismayed and terrified,
Thus spake to Death, "Since the last soul hath died,
Numbed with thy rancorous venom here and slain—
Since man no more exists to suffer pain,
Lie down thyself, and die." But, furious-eyed,
Ravenous and grim, Death raised his haughty head
And pointed to the stars, "Yon worlds," he said,
"With all their multitudes, were made for me,—
For *me* created and inhabited;
And souls unborn on myriad orbs to be
Are mine, foredoomed through all Eternity!"

DELAY, O LIGHT

DELAY awhile, delay, O sinking light!
Linger, a solace in the fading sky;
Spread not those golden pinions as to fly,
But stay for me, who watch upon the height:
Remain! for soon—too soon—will come the night,
When from the crags around me here on high
Shall fade the sunset colors; all shall die,
And shadow spread her universal blight.

Eternal Darkness, fold thy fateful wings!
And let the twilight we call Life—that spark—
A brief time longer last; that he who sings
May strive, with bleeding plumes, to touch his mark:
Delay! for he has high imaginings
Imperative to utter ere the dark.

THE BUILDER

As some worn mason by the village street
Works at a chapel day by day, alone,
And slowly hewing, places every stone,—
Then some sad twilight, through the dusty heat
Treads homeward o'er the hills with weary feet,
Finds the sole light within his cottage gone,
The dark door enters, and there dies, unknown,
Leaving his building ever incomplete,—
So I, at evening, o'er the hills shall roam,
Worn with my masonry and Art's sharp thong,
Missing the star that led my steps so long,
And lie, at last, within my darksome home,
Leaving the rude Cathedral of my Song
Unfinished still—devoid of spire or dome.

THE DAWN OF SCIENCE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

HARK, on the peak, the Hosts of Morning choir!
Fame's clarion blares, and Youth of stout emprise
With light of learning in undaunted eyes
Leaps to the front and nears his heart's desire!
For new vibrations of the great World-lyre
Man listens—ear to earth, and laboring buys
Success with Science; yet how distant lies
The glorious height to which his steps aspire!
As Humboldt heard, on Oronoko's shore,
The rocks at morning make melodious sound,
Filling with strangeness all the blue profound,
So, as the Century lifts her sunrise wings,
A vibrant music from the Harp of Things
Peals through the World—a strain unheard before!

HE MADE THE NIGHT

VAST Chaos, of eld, was God's dominion ;
 'T was His belovèd child, His own first-born ;
 And He was agèd ere the thought of morn
 Shook the sheer steeps of dim Oblivion.
Then all the works of darkness being done
 Through countless æons hopelessly forlorn,
 Out to the very utmost verge and bourne,
 God at the last, reluctant, made the sun.
He loved His darkness still, for it was old ;
 He grieved to see His eldest child take flight ;
 And when His *Fiat Lux* the death-knell tolled,
As the doomed Darkness backward by Him rolled,
 He snatched a remnant flying into light
 And strewed it with the stars, and called it Night.

IN MEMORIAM

H. H. H., JR. OBIT. ROME—1879

THEN died for us more life than often dies,—
The child, the lad, the youth, the unconscious Prince,
All untamed boyhood's thousand royalties—
These passed with him, nor have they risen since.
His face drew downward from benignant skies
The chiseled beauty of the sculptured stone;
And all the luminous dark of Tuscan eyes
Was mirrored there, still lovelier, in his own.
And now, beyond the range of sorrow's dart,
He lives in fields of calm eternity,—
A flower whose leaves shall never fall apart
Though gusts of half forgetfulness drift by:
His memory blooms a rose within the heart
Where deep affection will not let it die.

WITH FOLDED WINGS

WHY should I, like the restless, ever roam,
And clip the world from shining shore to shore?
To-day beneath their native sycamore,
Beside the palm to-morrow, far from home;
They pass the sea and all its snowy foam,
Its vast and fitful rolling and its roar;
Mountains and vales, dread deserts they explore,
And glorious cities dim with many a dome;
Lone lakes they sail among the Pyrenees;
And in mute marble see the immortals bloom
Down the long aisles of gilded galleries,
And censers swinging in cathedral gloom:
Why should I travel, when I see all these
Within the silence of my lamp-lit room?

RELENT, O ATROPOS!

O THOU who fill'st the caverns of the dead;
Whose icy heart stagnates with pallid blood;
Whose orbs, implacable, beneath thy hood
Glare past the outposts of this World, and shed
Indifference worse than hate—Destroyer dread,
At last relent! In pity look thou down
Where Love—dear Love—a-tremble at thy frown,
Fears the swift severance of the golden thread!
Others we yield thee, thou insatiate soul!—
Passion and Wealth; Beauty, or even Hope,
These from us take, whose steps grow faint with years,—
But Love—sweet Love!—Oh, on life's darkening slope
Leave *him* our desolation to console—
A child is he and in his eyes are tears!

THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO

AT DELPHI NEAR PARNASSUS

Two eagles, from the utmost East and West,
Freed by great Zeus, met here in times of old
And marked Earth's centre, where, in shapes of gold,
Men reared a semblance of them to attest
The spot whereon the Oracle should rest;—
Desolate now!—statue and tripod rolled
To blank oblivion,—lips that once controlled
The World, vanished beyond all human quest!
Yet from thy ruined Fane, thy sacred springs—
Castalia and her sister—as of yore,
Gush forth to-day potent with Delphian dreams:
God of the lyre! as we have lost our wings,
Draw thou again anear us—Oh, once more
Lead us to these inviolable streams!

“THE NOONTIDE GONE”

IN murmuring silence of these cottage rooms,
The noontide gone, I rest beside the sea;
And through the latticed window, thoughtfully,
Peer down upon the crowd that, flower-like, blooms
Along the beach and where the breaker booms.
The surge of Life's and Youth's intensity
Is there. Unmoved, I gaze beyond their glee
Far o'er the unfathomable ocean's glooms.

From the dim chamber of maturer years,
One looks with lessened ardor than before;
And through the lattice dark of hopes and fears
With small concern hails joy, and calmly hears
Love's surges beat against Life's lessening shore
As on a land that he shall touch no more!

THE PUPIL OF PHILETAS

In Cea's isle, fragrant with new-pressed wine,
Philetas, all attenuate by thought,
Sat 'neath the ilex and his pupil taught
The guarded secret of the sacred Nine.
Then the boy wandered to the upland pine
And piped above the sea. Soon Slumber wrought
Her poppied spell, and from his hushed lip caught
The falling flute that waked the strain divine.
In sunset dreams he saw himself, erelong,
Honored of Crowns; as wingèd hours flew,
Laurels enwreathed him, and the listening Muse
Enthroned his name among the stars of Song. . . .
Waking, he smiled and touched his pipe,—nor knew
The vengeful fate that lurked at Syracuse.

INVOCATION

I

O GUARDIAN of the sought-for sacred fire,
Mother of splendor springing from the mind,
Imperial Inventress, let me find
Melodious solace great as my desire!
Grant me to waken thy impassioned lyre
To most mellifluent music, and unbind
The bands of silence; oh, once more be kind,
E'en unto me, the least among thy choir!
Spirit of deathless Poësy and Dreams,
Stoop down above me all the day and night,—
Be ever near the while I draw this breath;
Oh, flood me with thy visionary light,
And make me vocal with thy starry themes
Before the final aphony of death!

INVOCATION

II

O BREATH of Godhead, voicing mysteries
That mortal men, unheeding, seldom hear,
Fain would my spirit bend a reverent ear
To feast upon Thy heavenly harmonies!
Come through the sunset gates, or on the breeze
Memnonian, murmur to me, spirit-clear;
Breathe solace, and dispel this lifelong tear
By mystic music sweeter than the sea's!
Give to this essence flaming seraph wings,
Or burn it, incense-like, to Thee and Thine,
Upon Thy altar with its purging fire;
Strike Thou at last from out these trembling strings
Apocalypses of the Inner Shrine—
O Breath of God! make of my soul Thy lyre!

A CATTLE PICTURE BY CUYP

WITH MAN PIPING

LIST! . . . 't is the cowherd's mellow tones that fill
The glowing spaces of the golden air,
While the rich group of kine, with sun-smit hair,
Dream their dull dream of wadings by the mill.
Tread softly through the grasses, hush! be still . . .
Speak not above a whisper—have a care,
Lest he should cease his flutings! . . . Notice where
The shepherd, listening, pauses on the hill:
The very children gaze, and stop their play,
Bound to the place by music's magic bands. . . .
O piper of the picture, keep thy hands
Forever on thy flute, as here to-day!
The world is full of noise,—pipe on, we pray,
Thy note the spirit hears, and understands.

THE PROCESSION

FROM caverns of the countless ages vast,
Along the twilight of the monstrous sky,
Huge, gloomy figures, dark with majesty,
Hooded, mysterious, stalked from out the past.
Slowly they filed, and as I looked, aghast,
Their distant voices seemed one hollow sigh
Filled with Remembrance and with Prophecy:
They peered upon me as a thing outcast.
Frowning reproof athwart the upbraiding skies,
No word they spake, but in each cloudy scowl
The cold aversion of averted eyes
Burned me as fire, and did my soul arraign;
While from the smouldering orbs beneath each cowl,
I felt the deep, ineffable disdain.

SHAKESPEARE

APRIL, 23d, 1564-1616

APRIL SPEAKS

My pride is not in that I cause to bloom
Each year the hawthorn by the cottage gate;
Nor that I raise the rose's heart elate
With thoughts of climbing to my lady's room;
But that, one golden dawn, I did illumine
The world with him—a light to dominate
And daze all time. It was my envied fate
To lay him in his cradle and his tomb.
When Nature gave him she became lovelorn,
Nor would she let him longer here abide;
And if in memory of the time, men mourn,
Grieving, "This is the day that Shakespeare died,"
I, April, answer from the Avon-side,
"This is the day my dearest child was *born!*"





NOTES

Page 17.—The author's thanks are due, and are here tendered, to the following Magazines and Journals for permission to reprint sonnets which have appeared in their columns: the *Century Magazine*, page 17 of this volume; *Everybody's Magazine*, page 333; the *Mail and Express*, pages 74-82-103-177; the *Independent*, page 185, and to any others if by inadvertency they may have been omitted.

Pages 22-58-69.—These sonnets and some others in this collection were written during a period of great illness when the author's life was many times despaired of—an illness brought on, unknowingly, by over-application to this his chosen work.

Page 44.—A precipice on the Susquehanna near Columbia, Pennsylvania, named Chicquesalunga. In this picturesque region, in the valley or upon the rocky headland, the stroller may still occasionally find a stone tomahawk or flint arrow-head.

Page 79.—In America the discovery of ether as an anæsthetic is, with authority, attributed to Dr. Horace Wells, October, 1845.

Page 94.—*A Study of Trees* by Claude Lorraine, in the National Gallery, London.

Page 95.—Epigram XIX.

Pages 102-301.—The untraveled reader, curious as to modern Hellas, will find great pleasure in the perusal of Prof. J. P. Mahaffy's *Rambles in Greece*.

Pages 109-110-111.—Three sonnets forming a part of an unpublished Sequence of sixty, entitled, *Wings of the Morning*.

Pages 109-180.—*Conowingo* and *Swatara*—two beautiful creeks in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, confluent of the Susquehanna, each bearing an Indian name.

Page 167.—During the years which elapsed between Shakespeare's return from London and his death, it is surmised that he wrote nothing. Yet it is reasonable to infer that he looked forward to another period of creative work, it being unimaginable that this fountain should have run itself dry.

Page 168.—An old Italian painting in the author's home.

Page 177.—The writer of these lines was honored at different times, by receiving a copy of each of the late Canon Wilton's books of Verse, and by personal letters which Cowper might have envied.

Page 189.—The author here ventures beyond the limit of the myth and imagines that Marpessa, weary of her union with Idras, yearns for the return of her immortal lover.

Page 195.—These attempts to put into the form of Sonnets some of the more poetical portions of three of the Greek poets must not be taken too seriously by the learned critic. No claim is made to scholarship, and the reader is asked to consider a few embroideries on the text as venial faults perhaps permitted to one who uses the rigid sonnet form as a vehicle of expression.

When these sonnets were written the author had not seen E. C. Lefroy's *Echoes from Theocritus*, nor indeed, did he know of the book; he is, however, under many obligations, especially to Mr. Post's fine version of Bacchylides, and to Mr. Lang's prose version of Bion and Moschus. The exceeding and "importunate beauty" of the phrasing of portions of this version of Mr. Lang's makes it, at times, almost impossible to do otherwise than to echo some of his felicities of diction.

Page 246.—This sonnet, written in 1897, is here reproduced from *The Slopes of Helicon*. It will be seen that the author has made use of part of a line used by Shelley in his version of this Fragment.

Page 277.—Epigram VI.

Page 288.—Epigram III.

Page 297.—The author's father, who died in his eighty-second year, was until the last passionately fond of poetry. Especially did he enjoy the sonorous passages of Shakespeare, and he delighted in reading them, as all poetry *should* be read, aloud. He was himself the author of a small volume of Lyrics which was published in 1835. His progenitors were English Friends who came to Pennsylvania from Warminster in Wiltshire, England, in 1679, and took up properties in the settlement, which, three years later, Penn named Philadelphia.

Pages 300-327.—The germ of these two sonnets may be found in the late P. G. Hammerton's essays.

Page 328.—This sonnet is entirely impersonal, the author having no personal knowledge of the effects of the narcotic in question.

Page 344.—A water-color painting by Morland in the writer's possession.

Page 358.—For the exquisite statue of Love and Atropos by Gustave Doré.

Page 359, line 10.—*Castalia and her sister*, i. e. the stream, Cossotis.

Page 361.—*Cea*, one of the ancient names of the island of Cos, in the Ægean.

The author has made use of the supposition—founded on Ovid's very inconclusive statement—that Theocritus was strangled by order of Hiero II, of Syracuse.

.
"To appreciate a collection of sonnets," wrote James Spedding, "you should read them one by one, with intervals between long enough to let the impression of each get out of the other's way. It is this which gives a collection of sonnets a bad chance with professional critics, whose business it is to pronounce judgment without delay upon all volumes that are brought before them."

Leigh Hunt writes, "A sonnet is, or ought to be, a piece of music as well as of poetry."

Wordsworth says, "Poems cannot read themselves. The reader must bring out the music of the poem. I require an animated and impassioned recitation, adapted to the subject."







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